COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY M.P.

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MEMOIR OF
COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY

Photo Kate Bagnell. Art Engra. Co.

Yours faithfully
W. Bourke Stacey

MEMOIR OF COLONEL THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM KENYON-SLANEY, M.P.

EDITED BY WALTER DURNFORD
FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

"Not stirring words, nor gallant deeds alone,
Plain, patient work fulfilled that length of life;
Duty, not glory—service, not a throne,
Inspired his effort, set him for the strife."
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PREFATORY NOTE BY THE EDITOR

DEC 16 1940

Of the seven chapters comprised in this short memoir, only the first and second were written by me. Those chapters which deal specially with the political career of Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, and with matters relating to the county which he represented in Parliament—namely, Chapters III., IV., VI., and VII.—have been written by Mr. William Bridgeman, M.P., who, as a lifelong friend and neighbour of the subject of the memoir, was eminently qualified to undertake the task. Chapter V. has been entrusted to Miss Violet Kenyon-Slaney, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney's sister. I have to acknowledge the kindness of many friends who have aided me in presenting this sketch of one whose interests and activities were manifold, and especially my thanks are due to the Right Hon. Walter Long, M.P., the late Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, M.P., General the Hon. Sir N. G. Lyttelton, and Captain James

HARDING

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Foster, for appreciations of Colonel Kenyon-Slaney which they have allowed me to insert; and to Colonel Ralph Leeke and Major Arthur LLoyd for the contribution of information.

W. D.

CAMBRIDGE,
March, 1909.

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MEMOIR OF
COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY

CHAPTER I

ETON AND OXFORD

"They toil at games, they play with books,
They love the winner of the race,
If only he who conquers looks
On prizes with a simple grace."

IONICA.

THE subject of this memoir, William Slaney Kenyon-Slaney, was born on August 24, 1847. Although he was a "Shropshire lad" if ever there was one, he was not born in the county where he was to spend so much of his life, and with which he was so closely connected throughout that life by family as well as by political ties. He was born in India, at Rajcot, where at that time his father was serving in the East India Company's army. Captain William Kenyon, the father of William Kenyon-Slaney, was the fourth son of the Hon. Thomas Kenyon of Pradoe, third son

of Lloyd Kenyon, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, and first Lord Kenyon. Mr. Thomas Kenyon's four-in-hand and chestnut team was well known on the road to Shrewsbury or Oswestry in the first half of the nineteenth century. Every Saturday "His Honour," as he was commonly called, would drive his coach into Shrewsbury, and he was always willing to take up any "poor folk" and give them a lift, provided that they left their umbrellas on the road, for to umbrellas he had a rooted objection, and would never allow one on his coach. Nor was he less well known to Shropshire folk as Chairman of Quarter Sessions, a position which he filled for many years with an ability such as might be expected from the son of so distinguished a judge.

William Kenyon was educated at Rugby and Christ Church, Oxford, and, after proceeding to his degree in that University, joined, in 1835, the 2nd Regiment of the Bombay Light Cavalry, from which he retired in 1852 with the rank of Captain. In 1845 he married Frances Catharine, daughter and co-heiress of Robert Slaney (who was for thirty years M.P. for Shrewsbury), and assumed by royal sign-manual the name of Slaney after that of Kenyon. Mrs. Kenyon-Slaney succeeded, on the death of her father in 1862, to the Hatton

estate, and from that time Hatton Grange was the home of William Kenyon-Slaney and his brothers and sisters. Hatton Grange was a grange of Buildwas Abbey, and has been for more than 200 years in the possession of the Slaney family, who were originally landowners in the counties of Warwick and Stafford.

The first mention of the name Slaney of which there is any record is in the time of the Empress Maud, when Rodolphe de Slanie came over from Bohemia in her train. Sir Stephen Slaney, mentioned in the Herald's Visitation of 1623, was Lord Mayor of London in 1595.* The present house was built by Plowden Slaney in 1747, and is a dignified Georgian building, commodious and pleasant, as most of the houses of that period are, and containing some interesting pictures.

Although the country in the immediate neighbourhood will not compare with the most beautiful parts of that beautiful county, the grounds of Hatton, with their fine beeches, are very pleasant, and a singular attraction is added to them by a chain of pools, originally the fish-ponds of the monks, and improved and linked together in later times. Their names—Abbot's Pool, Purgatory

* "Shropshire Houses, Past and Present," by Stanley Leighton, M.P. 1901.

Pool, and Hell Pool—bear witness to their origin. Here the red sandstone rock crops out in picturesque fashion, and trees and shrubs flourish with a luxuriance which recalls sheltered spots in far Southern counties. These pools were a constant source of interest and amusement to young William Kenyon-Slaney, and his diaries are full of allusions to the fish he caught there, the birds he watched, the litters of foxes he marked down.

Never did any boy, it is true to say, have a home which he loved better, or one more calculated to foster all the best imaginings of one who was to take his place some day as a Shropshire country gentleman. It was a happy home, in which the parents not only entered into all the sports and amusements of their children, but watched over their mental and moral growth with loving solicitude and care. How fond, how anxious, was the care may be traced in two short extracts from letters written by his parents to William Kenyon-Slaney while he was still a boy.

The first is from his mother just before his Confirmation:

"My own dear fellow, my whole heart is with you on Thursday. Oh! do not forget now or ever the great cloud of witnesses who watch your onward steps, and who compass us about—they

watch the race we run with earnest eyes, anxious for our success."

The second is from his father :

"I am truly glad that you are quite free from debt. No one but those who have experienced it can tell the misery of debt, and how much sorrow, disaster, and crime can be traced to it. Depend upon it, it is far better to deny oneself many a pleasure and luxury than to have and try to enjoy them with the millstone of debt around your neck."

This care and solicitude on the part of his parents was repaid by the son with an affection which never failed, a desire to spare his parents any annoyance or inconvenience, which was translated into many acts of self-denial, and into a consideration which was none the less exquisite because it seemed the most natural thing in the world. Nearly twenty years afterwards, when Kenyon-Slaney was on the point of starting with his regiment to take part in the expedition against Arabi Bey, his father expresses in a touching letter, dated July 28, 1882, and written in a feeble and trembling hand, his sense of what he owed to the love and devotion of his son :

"I wish with all my heart that Cork were nearer, or that my poor carcass had more power of locomotion ; then would I shake your hand on

the *Batavia* deck, and give you my hearty blessing, as warm and as hearty as any ever uttered by father to the best of sons."

In September, 1860, after spending some years in the private school kept by Mr. Taylor, who, in a letter dated December, 1861, expresses a belief that "the walls of St. Stephen's will one day witness to more popular and glorious successes" than the boyish success of which he wrote, Kenyon-Slaney proceeded to Eton, and became an inmate of the famous House of Evans. That House, then presided over by William Evans, the father of Jane Evans, "the last of the Eton Dames," had at that time, as afterwards, features of its own which differentiated it to some extent from other Eton Houses. It was in a great measure a self-governing community, and the elder boys exercised a power and wielded a control more approaching to the monitorial system than is usual at Eton. In that free atmosphere Kenyon-Slaney learnt and developed many of those qualities, such as self-reliance and self-control, which stood him in good stead in after-life. It would be affectation to assert that he ever became a scholar, but he did learn, in the spacious leisure which then was perhaps the special quality of Eton training, a certain love for literature and respect for the great

authors of Greece and Rome which lasted through his life, and contributed in no small measure to his happiness. Like many members of the same famous school, he was always fond of quoting Horace, and the appositeness of the quotation was not destroyed by an occasional inaccuracy. Letters from the two masters who were successively his tutors—the Rev. F. E. Durnford and the Rev. F. St. John Thackeray—show that he always took a reasonable interest and attained a reasonable proficiency in the studies of the place.

For games he quickly showed that he had an unusual aptitude, and especially for football, in which game he afterwards became a really first-rate player. General Lyttelton,* who was his senior by about two years at Eton, and remained to the day of his death a close friend, has kindly allowed the present writer to use the following memorandum, which contains some reminiscences of Kenyon-Slaney's early days:

"He came to Evans' in September, 1860, at the same time, I think, as the late Sir Edward Hamilton,† Sir Hubert Parry,‡ Harry Sturgis, the late

* General the Hon. Sir N. G. Lyttelton, G.C.B.

† The late Right Hon. Sir Edward Hamilton, G.C.B., Permanent Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

‡ Sir Hubert Parry, Bart., Mus. Doc., late Professor of Music in the University of Oxford.

Julian Sturgis, and Granville Farquhar. He soon developed an extraordinary aptitude for football, and though not big for his age, he succeeded in getting into his House Eleven in his first half, a remarkable feat in so large a House, probably unprecedented. Bishop John Selwyn* was captain of the eleven, which was a pretty good one, and only lost by one goal to Joynes', who eventually won the cup. He played for the House for six years, but suffered many disappointments, and it was not until 1865 that he played in the winning team. He was an enthusiastic cricketer, but never reached the front rank at Eton, though he was more than a respectable player for the Household Brigade in after life. But he was one of a group of small boys who used to field out in Upper Club when the big boys were practising, all of whom became excellent catches and fields. He was in the House Cricket Eleven from 1863 onwards, and I remember him, Owen, and A. C. Thompson especially shining in the field in 1864, when we won the cup. He was an excellent influence in the House, and was one of those who staunchly supported me when I was Captain in 1863-64."

It may be admissible here to quote a few

* Bishop of Melanesia, and afterwards Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge.

lines from the almost dithyrambic account of the final match for the Football Cup in 1865 contained in Evans' House Book: "On Monday, November 11, Evans' encountered their old antagonists, Drury's, in the Field, to try if they could at length secure the much-desired cup. The day was everything that could be desired, and the crowd, therefore, immense." After a detailed account of events in the early part of the game, the narrative continues: "At length one of the kicks-off fell near Kenyon-Slaney, who took the ball across the field for the line on the other side of the goals. When about ten yards from the line he was charged by Norman, who, however, failed in his purpose, for Kenyon-Slaney, kicking the ball behind at the right moment, and being fortunately able to touch it, obtained a most undoubted rouge. Nothing further was scored. 'Last bully' was called, formed, broken, and terminated, and amid universal cheers and congratulations Evans' left the field, having accomplished that which they had never done before, and brought to their House a trophy well worth the struggle that had earned it."* Long afterwards he writes to his wife, February 3, 1905:

* "Annals of an Eton House," by Major Gambier Parry. 1907.

"The account in the *Chronicle* of My Dames winning the cup brings so home to me the match in which I won it for them for the first time just forty years ago."

Like many other Etonians, Kenyon-Slaney made his first oratorical efforts in the rooms of the "Eton Society," familiarly known as "Pop." An Etonian who had left the school some few years before remembers being present in 1865 at a debate in Pop on the character of Sir Robert Walpole, which was the occasion of a spirited duel between Kenyon-Slaney and the present Lord Rosebery, then Lord Dalmeny. Unfettered by the pedantic rules which prevail in the House of Commons, each of the rival politicians rose time after time to advance new arguments or dispute the conclusions of the other, and only the imminence of 5 o'clock school put an end to the duel.

That Kenyon-Slaney was not indifferent to some measure of success in school work may perhaps be inferred by the following extracts from letters written by two school friends, J. Mercer and J. W. B. Riddell,* in 1865:

"I send you," Mercer says, "the first class in Collections—Rawlins,† Macnaghten, Mercer,

* Sir J. W. Riddell, Bart.

† F. H. Rawlins, Lower Master of Eton.

EVANS' HOUSE ELEVEN, 1865.

C. W. Greenwood. W. H. Ady. W. S Kenyon-Slaney. J. H. Ridley. R. Meysey-Thompson.
A. Meysey-Thompson. E. W. Hamilton. C. H. H. Parry. M. Horner.
J. R. Sturgis. T. Carr-Lloyd.

THE HOUSE CHALLENGE CUP.

To face page 10.

Staples, Slaney. If it were not for the Collegers, what swells the Oppidans would appear!" While Riddell, writing on April 9, says: "You were fourth in Collections, Chermside* and Prothero† the two first. You will probably have seen in the papers that Hervey‡ got the Newcastle."

This brief record of Kenyon-Slaney's school life may close with a characteristic letter from N. G. Lyttelton, who had just joined his battalion of the Rifle Brigade at Winchester:

"DEAR SLANEY,

"I quite forgot your ten bob till last night, and therefore send it to-day. I am located here, and get on very well. I have four drills a day, the first being—*miserabile dictu*—at 6.45 a.m. This is far from pleasant, especially when there is a north-east wind. I am going in for gymnastics here, which is rather severe.

"I remain, yours,

"NEVILLE,

"(Duke of Lyttelton, K.G., F.M., G.C.B.,

"D.C.L., etc., that is to be)."

Across the gulf of more than forty years the

* Major-General Sir Herbert Chermside, G.C.M.G.

† G. W. Prothero, Litt.D.

‡ Lord F. Hervey, Civil Service Commissioner.

present* Commander of the Forces in Ireland may look with interest at the forecast made by him in jest in the first days of his commission.

The life at Eton was pleasant enough, but it was probably in his own home during the holidays that Kenyon-Slaney passed his happiest days. He was a thorough country boy, passionately fond of sport in every form, but not all absorbed in the love of killing. A small notebook, much thumbed and worn, contains entries made by him which show a genuine love for natural history, and the beginning of that love of observing the habits and the haunts of wild things which was so conspicuous all through his life. A few extracts may be permitted :

"*August*, 1862.—Stockdale the Keeper told me that while going round the other day he saw a cat go into a hedge towards a turnip-field, apparently with the purpose of poaching. She was soon followed by a fox. They met in the hedge, and a terrible fight ensued. It ended at last in Pussy's making her escape not scatheless."

"1862.—During this year I caught at Eton by the riverside the eyed-hawk and poplar-hawk moths."

"*April*, 1863.—I learnt to-day that toads

* 1909.

destroy fish. R. Kenyon sometimes found his baits (roach) sucked and mangled about the head, but not bitten like a pike would. He could not guess what it was, till at last he drew up one bait with the toad sitting on the head, which was sucked and mangled."

"*April*, 1863.—List of arrivals of migrating birds as seen by myself at or near Walford." (The list follows.)

"*April* 30, 1865.—Knowing that there was a litter in Blubber Hole, I this day managed to make a successful stalk after dinner, and had the pleasure of seeing five or six cubs at play about the mouth of their castle. *Esto perpetuum!*"

His cousin, the Rev. Alfred Kenyon, Rector of Ludlow, thus refers to schoolboy days: "Of all our cousins, Edgar and I knew Willie best. We used to drag the river at Grafton every year, and once he joined us, and I remember he made me run home—about three miles—with him all the way, and would not let me walk a yard. He was always so full of life and energy. Many of my reminiscences centre round old Rogers, the keeper at Grafton. How Willie used to pitch into him! And Rogers thought there was no one like Willie. I can hear them now shouting to each other. And the way Willie made the

most of our little shoot at Grafton! It was so interesting to follow up all his scheming to keep the birds on his own ground, and to account for every covey."

In December, 1865, Kenyon-Slaney left Eton, and after an interval of a year with a private tutor, the Rev. John Sedgwick, of Great Haughton Rectory, Northamptonshire, proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, whither many of his Eton contemporaries, as E. W. Hamilton, H. J. Tollemache, and A. F. Walter, had proceeded him. The first-named of these friends writes to Kenyon-Slaney in January, 1867: "I am very glad you are coming up next term; I trust we may see you in the club (St. Aldate's). I am having a most awfully enjoyable vacation, but I am afraid I have not done much work, and must make up for it next term." Unlike the rest of his friends who had gone to Oxford, Kenyon-Slaney went there with no intention of taking a degree, but merely of waiting till he received a commission in the Guards. In these circumstances it is not surprising that he took no great interest in the studies of the place; the course of life which had been mapped out for him gave little inducement to academic study, and the remark made by one of his cousins, Mr. Trevor Kenyon, who at that

time saw much of Willie Kenyon-Slaney, is probably true: "I do not think he got the full benefit of Oxford life, somehow. He was, as it were, spoiling for the Army." Yet over him, as over almost all those who have come under her influence, Oxford—"dear city of youth and dreams"—cast in some measure her spell, and Kenyon-Slaney always referred to his brief sojourn in the University as one of the very happy years of his life. So for a year he enjoyed the sports and easy companionship of an Oxford life, undismayed by the prospect of approaching schools, and "caught the blossom of the flying terms" with the zest and heartiness which he afterwards showed for all that came in his way, whether it were work or play. Among the few memorials of his Oxford days there remains a proctorial notice dated March 24, 1867, requesting Mr. Kenyon-Slaney of Christ Church to call on the Senior Proctor at 9 a.m. It is endorsed "for helping to break up a Radical meeting in the Town Hall, at which Professor Rogers presided. I was with Neeld, Egerton, and some more, and was finally and forcibly ejected by the police!" The little diary kept very intermittently by him while he was an Eton boy has now given place to one which naturally deals with wider interests and

occupations, but there is the same close observation of the habit of bird and beast, and, of course, far more ample opportunity of observing them afforded by the length of the Oxford vacation as compared with the Eton holidays. The love of sport is evidently uppermost in his mind, but the interest is not so much that of the sportsman as of the naturalist, who knows and loves every inch of the familiar country over which he shoots or fishes or hunts. Much cricket, both county and country-house, is recorded in June and July, 1867, and in that year he was, greatly to his pleasure, elected a member of the Free Forester C. C. In August and September a long stay at the Shooting Lodge of Phalair, on the Tilt, introduced him to grouse-shooting and deer-stalking, which he thoroughly enjoyed. A careful record of each day's sport was kept by him.

On Monday, November 10, 1867, appears the following entry in the diary: "Came down from Oxford, having taken my name off the books in consequence of the long-waited-for commission in the Grenadier Guards having come at last." So the period of boyhood and youth comes to an end, and the next chapter in W. Kenyon-Slaney's life, fraught with many burdens and responsibilities, but full of innumerable interests, and brightened

by innumerable friendships, begins. On November 20, 1867, he writes: "My name appeared in the *Gazette* to-day, so I am a soldier at last." He joined the 3rd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards at Dublin.

CHAPTER II

THE GUARDS AND HATTON

"He bore, without abuse,
The grand old name of gentleman."

TENNYSON.

A RECORD of the home service of an officer in the Guards can hardly be anything but monotonous, nor is it the intention of the present writer to follow Kenyon-Slaney's career as a soldier in anything like detail. The changes of quarters from London to Windsor, and from Windsor to Dublin, which were then the only changes possible, are hardly more exciting than the changes "from the blue to the green room," and, indeed, neither in the diaries, which are now entirely occupied by events at Hatton during periods of leave, nor in letters from private friends does material exist for reconstructing on a minute scale this portion of Kenyon-Slaney's life, even did the scope and object of this sketch encourage any such attempt. But it is abundantly clear from the evidence of friends who served with him, and others, that Kenyon-Slaney

exhibited as an officer of the Household Brigade the same qualities which made him respected as a country gentleman and politician—tact, judgment, and, what is better, a genuine desire to understand and to sympathize with those with whom he was brought into contact. He was exceedingly popular with the men, because, though a strict disciplinarian, he understood their weaknesses as well as their virtues, and was always ready to befriend them by every means in his power. He was the friend and adviser of the officers who were his contemporaries or juniors, who recognized his absolute sincerity, his perfect straightness, his power of sympathy informed by strong common sense. One officer, much his junior, writing after his death, says (after mentioning that, by the orders of Lord St. Levan, commanding the Grenadier Guards, Kenyon-Slaney's death had been recorded in Regimental Orders) : "I am afraid that I can never do anything in return for the many acts of kindness which I received from him. He was the one man to whom I always went for help and advice whenever I was in doubt or difficulty, and the help always came as if it was a pleasure to him to give it, and what more could I say ?"

In 1870, Kenyon-Slaney, who was then Senior Ensign of the regiment, obtained, by the death of

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Colonel King, his step as Lieutenant and Captain without purchase. The value set on his work as a company officer may be estimated by the following extract from a letter written by Colonel Burnaby, the Commanding Officer of his battalion in 1876: "I was very sorry to transfer you to another company, because I know you had become attached to it, and it to you . . . but the battalion will derive benefit by having your attention, smartness, and tact bestowed on another of its companies, which requires it in a greater degree than No. X."

So the monotonous routine of regimental life went on, rather irksome, perhaps, after a time to Kenyon-Slaney, who, seriously as he took soldiering, and much as he enjoyed a spell of London society in the season, or the opportunity of seeing from Windsor old friends and old haunts at Eton, would much sooner have been setting trimmers on the pools at Hatton, or circumventing a rising trout in the brook, or "marauding" after some wild partridges or hedgerow pheasants. But in 1882 this routine was suddenly disturbed by the sending of a brigade of Guards, in which Kenyon-Slaney's battalion was included, to form part of the expeditionary force which was sent under Sir Garnet Wolseley to bring Arabi Bey and his followers to reason. It is no part of the plan of

this memoir to give any detailed account either of the revolutionary movement which gradually made the expedition inevitable, or of the military events which followed upon the decision of the British Government to send a force to Egypt. The first subject has recently been treated with consummate skill by one who was a protagonist in the affair, and the focus of interest in Egypt has, since 1882, so shifted that the tragedy of Khartoum and the resulting actions of the Atbara and Omdurman have somewhat dimmed the memories of Kasassin and Tel-el-Kebir. But it may be permissible, even in so slight a sketch as this, to give some extracts from letters written by Kenyon-Slaney to his family from the point of view of a regimental officer. He had been promoted Captain and Lieutenant-Colonel in 1878.

"*Cork*, *July* 20, 1882.—Inspection over. Men looked splendid and did well. A fair day, as promising as can be. We shall get on board about eleven to-morrow."

"The Camp, Ramleh,
"*August* 14, 1882.

"Dearest Mother,

"Here we are, all well, and face to face with Arabi, who, to my delight, but surprise, is still a reality. The camp is close to, but not

actually in sight of, the sea, on a sort of sandy plain. The place is a scattered village, chiefly made up of scattered villas and bettermost houses —in fact, it is the Brighton of Alexandria. Yesterday I was told off to arrange for the comfort of the battalion, so I bestirred myself, secured a staff-officer and an order to occupy a house close by us—within fifty yards. I made friends with the Arab in charge, took possession, wrote and affixed notices, put a sentry on the door, cleared out two rooms, put away all the furniture and locked it up safe, and here we are, luxuriantly established in the house of one M. Franco, who may or may not be in existence. Anyhow, he is very lucky to have such tenants, as we allow no mischief to be done, and keep out all other intruders. Yesterday we all cooked our own rations, and produced a most excellent series of stews and soups. To-day I have hired a dragoman and cook, and by to-night hope to have a comfortable mess in full swing. So much for the very minor matters of luxury. We, of course, know less than anyone of what is going on or is likely to happen. All we do know is that about three miles in front of us and from this room are Arabi's fortifications quite visible, with his men working at them. The camp rumour is that

to-morrow Arabi declares he will drive us into the sea. I have not the least hope that he will even try.

"This, of course, is a disjointed letter, as I am constantly interrupted, now by an Arab with some provisions, then by Jem Cotes to know how to spell Connaught, next by a message from the Colonel, and then by some of our youngsters, who can't spell *mos-* or *mus-* quito at all, so don't expect flowing periods.

"The fleet lying outside Alexandria was a fine sight, and the condition of the city a very lamentable one—rows and rows of utter ruins, of which ninety-nine hundreths are the result of incendiarism, the remaining cent of the bombardment. I have been constantly interested. At one moment I found myself standing on the grave and against the execution-post (a tree) of the murderers who were shot, and at another hunting a Maltese rascal on a mule who wouldn't obey me about camp till I ran him over some ropes and turned him head over heels on to the ground, and sent him off with a sore head and a lame leg. Most of the houses are looted—quite gutted and left bare—and it is melancholy to see the dry fountains, upset statues, and unkempt gardens. One I was in this morning was sweet with delicious

flowers of all sorts, and I thought how you would have enjoyed the sight, the scent, and the sun.

"Ever your affectionate son,
"W. K.-S."

"*August* 19.—As I write we are steaming with a large fleet of transports and men-of-war past Aboukir Forts. We don't quite know our destination, and whether we shall attack Aboukir to-morrow or sail on to Port Said and Ismailia is quite uncertain. Numerous friends turned up in Alexandria—Melgund, Fitzpatrick, Guy Dawnay, and others—most of them as correspondents to newspapers. We have on board Villiers, the artist of the *Graphic*. Captain just come back with orders to go on at nightfall. I suppose this means Cairo and cutting Arabi off, so may really bring us most quickly into action, after all."

"*August* 26.—Camp on Sweetwater Canal, between Ismailia and Zagazig. Perfectly well so far. We are encamped in a camp which we took from the enemy yesterday. He deserted it, and we had no fighting. On the 24th we left Ismailia, as reinforcements were wanted for the front. Got up just in time to see the last few

shells bursting, and lay down in our line to attack in the morning; then found enemy gone, and followed him here. We have nothing but the clothes on our backs, so I can only raise this scrap of paper, which I send back to Ismailia by a sick officer."

"CAMP EL MAHALOH,
"*September* 1.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"We are concentrating forces and supplies, and shall then, I hope, move well forward to Kasassin, our present advanced port, where there is an important lock on the canal, and in front of which the enemy is in position. Tel-el-Kebir is his main stronghold, and there it is expected the big fight will be. He is very strongly entrenched, and has a lot of guns, which he uses extremely well and with very great accuracy. I presume our game will be to keep him there till we can cut off his retreat and secure his stores, and then to give him notice to quit from front and flanks.

"I was sent into Ismailia yesterday, and found quantities of troops and stores, enough to provide for an annexation. Can that be the game?

"Did I tell you of our most provoking misfortune? After being five or six days with literally nothing but the clothes we marched in,

they sent up our little 40-pound field kits, but upset them all into the canal, and so utterly spoilt every single thing except actually clothing, which would dry again. All the little odds and ends, which here would be such luxuries, were quite destroyed. A good many fellows are seedy. Several who were in Africa and Afghanistan say those were picnics in the way of hardship and discomfort to this. However, we are all cheerful and content, and only want our turn to come soon. I never was better, and don't feel the heat a bit so far ; neither does it make me feel slack or idle. . . . The other day I was able to get out to our most advanced vedette on the Mahmoudieh canal, and to ride out with the officer a bit to the front. We were three-quarters of a mile from the enemy's position, and could see his men working like bees at their entrenchments. The mounted infantry, who had made a reconnaissance towards his camp, report some 750 tents, and he evidently has a good command of strength by the rapidity with which he gets up his works.

" My birthday present was my first introduction to shells fired in earnest, as we were up in time for the last of the firing, but luckily none of them fell amongst us. I was very pleased with H.R.H. of Connaught's order to me as we lay down on

our arms that night of the 24th: 'Now, if attacked, mind we fight it out where we stand. Don't budge an inch.'

"Ever your affectionate son,
"W. S. K.-S."

"*Kasassin, September* 12.—We have again been unlucky in the way of heavy marching, as on Saturday we were suddenly ordered to move up here at once, as an engagement was imminent. We started at 8.30, toiled through the desert some ten or twelve miles in the very hottest hours of the day, to arrive here, of course, too late to take any part in the skirmish, and to find that we were not really wanted at all."

"Cairo,
"*September* 18, 1882.

"My dear Father,

"I hope my mother will have received my hasty line from Tel-el-Kebir to tell her I had come all safe through the great fight. That morning I was suddenly ordered to take command of the brigade transport, and march it by road to Cairo. In consequence, I have been quite unable to write since, and I only reached this place a few hours since, having thoroughly enjoyed my time. Now for some details, which you will expect and enjoy, I know.

"On Tuesday night, 12th, just before dark, we struck our tents at Kasassin, got under arms, and marched off as soon as it was dark, with every precaution against noise. We moved slowly, and of course there was a good deal of wearisome wheeling, and backing and filling, to keep us all in our relative positions. At proper intervals we halted and slept (I as sound as a top) for two hours, and then before dawn advanced again. We knew that just before us was another brigade, but of further disposition we knew nothing. Of course, as light increased and dawn crept on, excitement began to increase, and one felt quite an intense wish for the business to begin. We were sure we were pretty close to their position, and that if they were still in it, the game must commence at once. The signal soon came in the sound of a gun to our left front, and then the whole of our front woke into a flash of continuous musketry fire. (It was still dark enough for the flashes alone to be visible, and they gave one the impression of low-down summer lightning, or electric experiments.) With it came the crash of the big guns, and the first shell came 'whisking over our heads and burst sixty yards behind me. This was followed by a regular succession of similar customers, till I learnt from the sound of

the discharge to know when to look out. They were admirably directed, but, thank God! all just too much elevated, and at least twenty or twenty-five burst at the same distance behind us. In the meantime we had deployed, and were advancing in attack formation—Coldstream on the left, Scots Guards in the rear—and very soon the little puffs of sand flying up in all directions showed we were within the rifle range. The bullets came in sharply, and casualties began. The first man I saw hit was the Roman Catholic parson, who was shot in the leg. Then we halted and lay down; the men were steady and quiet, but, of course, it was hard to be under fire without being able to return, and we, all of us, moved about to keep them confident. Then I lay down behind my company—my proper place—at first broadside on, watching and talking to the men. Then it suddenly struck me that 'end on' I could do that just as well, and make less of a target too. I hadn't changed my position a second before a bullet struck alongside me, and threw the stones all over me, which before would have taken me well in the ribs.

"We soon advanced again, and at once poor Balfour rolled over, and just as I passed him my poor pay-sergeant, Holmes, was knocked over close

to me : he was hit in the chest, and died directly, I heard, though, of course, I could not wait. The desert was dotted with fallen men, and we moved on quick, but in a very short time—I fancy about half an hour or three-quarters—the firing in front ceased, and we soon reached the entrenchments, and we were told that so complete had been the surprise and successful the attack that all was over, the whole place ours, and the enemy in utter rout. We moved on through dead and wounded till we topped a hill and found the whole of his camp and stores deserted beneath us, and we halted close to Tel-el-Kebir Station. It was a striking sight—very. After rest and food, I got a horse and rode back to see the field and the position ; the latter was immensely strong—a long curtain of entrenchment connecting a series of batteries and redoubts, and behind them a second line of ditch and wall. All the horrors of a stricken field were there to the full : quantities of dead, and, worse far, many wounded, lying in every direction. I counted 120 bodies on one little plateau of an acre. At the first entrenchment the bayonet had done terrible work, and in twenty yards of one ditch were 38 dead, and round one redoubt at least 200.

"What I believe happened was that the first line got very near them without being discovered,

and then took the place with a rush ; we were in support of the centre and right, where a much more stubborn resistance was expected, but we were never wanted—for which we have no one to thank but the enemy, who three times over, when it was our turn, ran away in the most unfair way —and so we did not really thoroughly share in the final attack, for which others deserve full credit. We were very willing and ready, and I'm sure the men would have given a real good account of themselves if they had had the chance. However, everyone can't always have the best of it, and we are glad to have been at least where we were, rather than away altogether.

"Our total loss was, in the regiment, one killed and some ten wounded, and in the brigade some twenty more wounded. Balfour* was shot through the calf—a nasty wound, but, I trust, not a dangerous one, and that all goes well. Well, the next morning I rode round again, and then started on my last mission, and had a most pleasant and interesting four days' march, with about 200 men, carts, and transport, through Zagazig, and thence by Belbeis and Galioub to Cairo, without any

* *October* 24.—W. Kenyon-Slaney's diary says : "Terrible news of poor Bertie Balfour's death from fever—a real shock and grief to us all."

trouble, though two days before it would have been through the heart of an enemy's country. The authorities at Zagazig were a little averse to my going without more force, but I undertook the responsibility, mapped out my journey, and moved off by myself. Atkinson, Corbet, and Stracey were the respective regimental representatives. The whole country was the most luxuriant fertile garden I ever saw, and the fields were crowded with people labouring, all rejoicing at our re-establishment of order, many, probably, having been in the ranks against us. I had luckily thought of getting an order from the Governor of Zagazig on all the sheiks of the villages to attend to me, and so we did capitally in the way of provisions. We were by way of being attacked one night, and I formed up for fighting, but a wild shot or two was all that happened, and we were soon at rest again.

"It was a most complete, crushing, and absolute success. This place is a marvel, and gives me the idea of living in a kaleidoscope perpetually being shaken. To attempt description would be foolish.

"With best love to mother and all. I'm so glad, for their sakes, all anxiety is over.

"Ever your affectionate son,

"W.S. K.-S."

"*Cairo, September* 21.—Arabi is in our hands for safe-keeping, and imprisoned close to where I write. He is a great big, heavy-looking Oriental of the ordinary type. I hear his surrender was dignified and composed enough."

The time of waiting to embark for home, after all was tranquil, was spent by Kenyon-Slaney in a trip up the Nile* as far as Assiout, which was greatly enjoyed by him. He saw all the sights, and, as usual, kept a sharp eye on bird-life in an unfamiliar country, seeing "lots of hawks, hoopoos, a sort of crested lark, black and white kingfishers, a few bright green birds with long tail feathers, and, of course, pelicans, cranes, and herons." But he was eager to get home. His letters are full of plans for a winter at Hatton, and of delight at the thought of seeing his family again. He embarked on October 30 on the s.s. *France*, and reached England on November 12.

A few years later, in the autumn of 1887, Kenyon-Slaney's active connection with the Household Brigade ceased, for he found that duty with his regiment and regular attendance in the House of Commons were, combined, too great a tax upon his health and strength.

* "Bridges, Lennox, Coke, Stracey, Wickham, and Corbett (the chaplain) are our party."

But one scheme for the benefit of the officers and men of the Guards owed both its inception, and in a great measure its realization, to him, and with it his name should always be connected. Before the year 1886 the Household Brigade had no ground in London definitely their own where cricket and football could be played. Kenyon-Slaney saw, as probably many other officers had seen, how great would be the advantage to the men if such a ground could be secured, and to him in the main the credit must be given that such a ground now exists. There was a piece of land conveniently situated near Chelsea Barracks, belonging to Chelsea Hospital, but used in a vague and general sort of way as a playground for the children of Chelsea. This ground, now the Burton Court Ground, Kenyon-Slaney set himself to acquire for the Brigade. But there were many difficulties in the way. The Government had to be induced to purchase, Chelsea Hospital had to be induced to sell, the opposition, natural enough, of the inhabitants of Chelsea had to be got over. The energy and persistence of Kenyon-Slaney was sufficient for all these things. He besieged the military authorities, he interviewed members of the Government. In one of the little diaries which contain

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY, 1886.

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records of social engagements and other memoranda, such entries as these occur :

"*October* 22, 1886.—Called on W. H. Smith* as to Chelsea : most kind."

"*October* 23.—Met Smith at Sir P. Grant's† as to Chelsea : most satisfactory. Saw Duke of Cambridge : also satisfactory. Shall win yet."

"*November* 23.—Heard we had got the ground from Chelsea Hospital : my first success."

No one who knows the temptation to which the soldier in London is subjected will be inclined to underrate the benefit of a recreation-ground, where the matches so dear to the soldier's heart between battalion and battalion or between company and company can be played before an admiring and enthusiastic audience of comrades.

Meanwhile, though soldiering was the serious business of Kenyon-Slaney's life, such time as he could spare from it was mainly spent in Shropshire, where he was learning to take his part in all the multifarious duties and occupations which make up the life of an English country gentleman. On Tuesday, August 25, 1868, his coming of age was celebrated at Hatton with all fitting festivities. He preserved many letters which reached him

* The late Right Hon. W. H. Smith, M.P.

† Then Governor of Chelsea Hospital.

from old friends on the occasion. One among them has a touching interest, for the writer was his comrade and contemporary at Eton and Oxford —Edward Hamilton—whose death, after a most laborious and useful life spent in the public service, took place but a few months after that of his correspondent. "I trust," says Hamilton, after expressing his sorrow at not being able to be present at the coming-of-age festivities, "that we may always be as good friends as I hope I may say we have always been hitherto." The trust was well justified. In his diary on August 25 Kenyon-Slaney writes : "A busy and memorable day for me. About one o'clock a procession of tenants and well-wishers formed at the Lodge, headed by Messrs. Cunliffe and Powell, marched up the drive (the band playing 'The British Grenadiers' in compliment to me), and formed in front of the house, where Mr. Powell presented my father, and Mr. Cunliffe me, with a beautiful and well-got-up address. Neighbours began to come in fast, and soon there was luncheon going on for ladies and such of the gentlemen as did not come into the tent to dine with the tenants ; then tea for the women and children, sports and dancing admirably managed, and kept up till it was too dark to see." Years afterwards, in 1902, on the

occasion of the opening of the "Coronation Grounds" at Dawley by Lady Mabel Kenyon-Slaney, he was reminded by one who had been present at the coming-of-age festivities of a phrase used by him then in his speech to the tenants, who had presented him with a silver cup: "My heart is as full of gratitude as this cup is of wine, and I am as unable to express the one as I am to empty the other."

In December, 1869, the family met at Hatton for a last reunion before they were scattered, Walter* having been posted to the Rifle Brigade, and Harry appointed to the flagship on the China station. Under the date January 1, 1870, an entry in the diary gives a retrospect of the past year, after a few remarks on the new life to which the writer has been introduced as an officer of the Guards.

"The life at home has been jogging along quietly and soberly; the year has taken away the dear old lady at Pradoe and Lord Kenyon, but, thank God, the inner circle is unharmed by illness. Walter, I fear, will have to go out to India to join his battalion, the 3rd of the Rifle Brigade. The country seems in no contented state; there is perpetual change and rumour of

* Now Major-General Kenyon-Slaney.

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change, and all in favour of advanced Radicalism and disregard of what has been."

In this year a project dear to Kenyon-Slaney's heart was put into execution. The old coach which had been unused for many years was horsed again with a somewhat scratch team, and he had the satisfaction both of driving it himself and of seeing his father drive it.

"*July* 28.—The little horse did not fret or pull much, and nothing could have been more satisfactory. As I threw the reins right and left from the box, I felt inclined to throw up my hat, as the neck of the job is now broken, I hope."

The coach was a great delight for the next few years, and in September, 1873, a coaching tour into Wales was successfully brought off, by Bala and Dolgelly, Peniarth, Machynlleth, Welshpool, and so back to Shrewsbury. "A more enjoyed and enjoyable trip was never made."

In September, 1870, the first break in the home circle at Hatton was caused by the death of his sister Edith, who died at Boulogne, after a very short illness, on her way back from a foreign tour, which had been cut short by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. Her death was a great blow to all the family, and not least to William Kenyon-Slaney, for he was devotedly attached to

a sister who seems, indeed, from the testimony of those who knew her, to have been a person of singular gifts and graces.

"*September* 7, 1870.—To-day we buried her in Shifnal Churchyard. The sun shone out as brightly as if it were summoned by the stirring words of the service; she always said she hoped it would whenever she was buried. And so ends the tale on earth of as pure and good a soul as ever adorned it, the most devoted of sisters and daughters, and the beloved of all who knew her, both rich and poor."

So the years passed on for Kenyon-Slaney, occupied by the routine of soldiering in London, at Windsor, and at Dublin, and by many country occupations and amusements in Shropshire and elsewhere, when leave was possible. In 1872 he qualified as a magistrate for the county. "It can do no harm, and may give me a chance of learning some things which may be useful before I do actual work." No keener sportsman ever followed the hounds, and of his long connection with the Albrighton Hunt some notice by those entitled to speak will be found in a subsequent chapter. From a boy he had been devoted to shooting, and either at home or in some of the many country houses where he was a welcome guest, shooting of

the best was at his disposal. The names of Weston, Wynnstay, Cheswardine, Hawkstone, Brogyntyn, and a dozen others occur over and over again in his diaries—hospitable houses where he was always glad to go when home duties did not interfere, and where the hosts were always glad to see him. A few lines out of the diary for 1873, taken almost at random, will serve as an example.

"*December* 7, 1873.—If this week had fourteen days I could fill them grandly, as Dick Lloyd offers me a mount on Monday and a capital shoot on Tuesday; Foster a shoot on Wednesday; Robertson also a shoot on Wednesday; and Edmund Peel a shoot on Thursday, and mount on Friday and Saturday. The last is a terrible temptation; but I ought to stay at home, so I have refused all but Apley." In the winter of 1874 his shooting was stopped for some time by an injury to his eye from a chance shot. This accident threatened for some weeks to impair his sight permanently; but he was an excellent patient, in admirable condition, and, thanks to a skilful doctor's treatment, in three months his cure was complete.

In 1876 another break was caused in the family circle by the sudden death of the sailor brother, Harry.

"*August* 15.—Was to have gone to Valle Crucis and shot again, but was summoned home by telegram, and found that news had been received from his captain of dear old Harry's death at sea on June 25. He was one of the best of fellows, and it is hard to think that we shall never again have him among us. My mother bears up well, and Agnes, but the blow falls heavy. Dear old boy!"

That was happening which must happen in every family, and the group of brothers, so united in this case, was in the next three years still more scattered by the sailing of Frank* (just posted to the 68th Regiment) to India, and Percy to South America. As his father's health grew less strong, responsibilities began to thicken round the only son left at home. The "shades of the prison house" which compass about not only "the growing boy," but the active-minded young man, began to descend, and Kenyon-Slaney was not one to shirk responsibility or refuse to see how circumstances were inevitably changing. He held the strongest views as to the duties which a position in the county such as he would occupy imposed, and the necessity of fulfilling them. "The longer I live," he says, writing to his

* Now Lieutenant-Colonel Kenyon-Slaney.

father in 1880, "the stronger is my conviction that the performing of his county duties well marks the really valuable gentleman more thoroughly than any distinction." It was clear to him that he must begin to take an active part in politics, and his first regular political work was in 1880, when he helped Mr. Donaldson Hudson in his election campaign at Newcastle-under-Lyme, and then threw himself into the struggle in Shropshire on the side of Mr. Severne and Mr. Stanley Leighton.

"*April* 2, 1880.—Came home from Newcastle, where we won a glorious victory, not only taking the seat from them, but putting Hudson at the head of the poll by 230. It was a bore to lose the last of the hunting, but I am very glad I went, as I know I was of considerable use. I had quite a curious political success, and the people took to me so much that I really believe they would have returned me too if I had stood. I did a good deal of small speech-making with success, and altogether felt my wings equal to a flight on my own account should an opportunity ever occur."

"*April* 6.—Canvassing all day for Severne and Leighton, and had considerable personal success, so much as to make me glad that I have thrown

myself into the struggle, which will be a close one."

"*April* 9.—At the polling-booth at Shifnal from 8.45 to 5, working hard, and, I know, securing several doubtfuls by being there."

"*April* 10.—Result of poll: Leighton, 2,491; Severne, 2,216; More, 2,140; Davenport, 1,634. So we win by 76 votes, which, considering the quantity of Conservative votes given to More, is not bad."

In 1881 Kenyon-Slaney acted as secretary for the purpose of calling together a meeting to consider the Conservative organization of the Northern Division of Shropshire, then represented by Viscount Newport.

As early as 1876 the condition of the Hatton property was causing him much anxiety. His father had never, perhaps, thrown himself very earnestly into the details of management, and as time went on the line of least resistance became natural to him. His health was far from good, and, moreover, that disastrous drop in the value of agricultural property, which has continued to the present day, was beginning to affect the landowners in almost every part of England. It was clearly necessary for Kenyon-Slaney to try and improve the condition of the estate, but in many

ways the task was a distasteful one. A few extracts from the diaries will show how unsatisfactory he considered the condition of affairs.

"*September*, 1876.—Strolled round and talked to L. and C. (two tenants). The former gives notice to leave at Lady Day—I fancy in consequence of his father's niggardly treatment—and W. (another tenant) has received notice in consequence of his disgraceful farming. The Grange Farm is still unlet, and prospects look gloomy. Surely management must be faulty. It is most unsatisfactory on every account, and I see much that I should like to alter, but I have a horror of playing the heir and suggesting expense."

"1877.—Curious to see what good and valuable land can be made out of pits' mouths by burning and levelling and gradually mixing soil. It takes much labour, and, therefore, costs much, but it is to be done, and there is no reason why the land should remain a wilderness when the mines are exhausted."

"1877.—I find that this year's occupancy of the Grange Farm will represent to my father a total loss of about £700. Much, too, wants doing at Grafton and here, and I am thoroughly dissatisfied with the present system, which benefits neither possessor, tenant, nor property."

"*April*, 1880.—Farming matters in an utter mess here. Grange let for £200 instead of £500. Ryton unlet altogether. Very serious."

To improve this state of affairs much was done by Kenyon-Slaney in the years 1877-84, while his father was still alive. The conditions of tenancy were more closely looked into; the dealings of estate agents with tenants were scrutinized and controlled; farms which had been unlet were relet, even though the continuance of agricultural depression rendered it inevitable that rents should be reduced; outlying farms were bought to round off the property, thanks to the timely and judicious aid of a member of the Slaney family. When Kenyon-Slaney was able to be at Hatton, his watchful eye was always on the estate, his thoughts were always on improvements —planting, thinning, repairing neglect, planning new farm-buildings, and the like.

In December, 1884, his father, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, died. He had been long in failing health, but the blow fell heavily on the family, and not least on the eldest son. His relations with his father had been almost more like those of a devoted younger brother than a son. No cloud had ever come between the affection of the one to the other. The study of the parent's happiness had

been the son's first and principal object in life. His mother survived until 1896, tended with anxious care by her family, and living in the old home at Hatton. The Hatton property was her own, and remained so as long as she lived; but with his father's death it was obvious that a great change must come over Kenyon-Slaney's life and his relation to the estate.

"Beginning of new life," he records in one of the little diaries, "new duties, new responsibilities. God help me to discharge them as he did who has bequeathed them."

So he set himself to undertake the burden and do his best in the position which had fallen to his lot. He "saw life steadily, and saw it whole." He was firmly convinced that the bounden duty of an owner of property was not merely to do the best he could by the property itself, but to further by every means in his power the welfare and happiness of all those who were in any way either dependent on him, or connected with him by the relations of landlord and tenant, employer and employed. To this he steadily set his mind, and with such success that when he died in 1908 there was no property in Shropshire better managed than his, no tenants, be they farmers or labourers, whose interests were considered in a more kindly

and sympathetic spirit. A striking testimony to this is afforded by the following extract from a letter written by the son of an old cottage tenant:

"*September* 28, 1907.—Honoured Sir, it was the greatest possible pleasure to me to see and shake hands with you at the Kirkdale Election meeting at Liverpool on Tuesday. . . . I was proud of the honour of being recognized as a son of your late tenant, Thomas Davies, though it is some time since I left Hatton, and I am now a signalman upon the Lanc. and Yorks. Railway. . . . May I venture to ask if you would spare a photograph of yourself? I should prize it very dearly as a memorial of one whom the Davies family regard as one of the noblest of gentlemen."

In the same spirit were the comments of the public press at the time of Kenyon-Slaney's death. The *Newport Advertiser*, April 26, 1908, says: "Some years ago he made a practical demonstration of his sympathy with the principle that every working man should have a comfortable and healthy dwelling by seeing to it that on his own estate no cottage should have less than three bedrooms, and that there should be proper drainage to each house. At his own expense he provided

a water-supply, which has been laid on to every house on the estate. Every cottage has a good garden. The cottages on the various farms are held under a written agreement from the Colonel, and thus every tenant of a cottage attached to the farm on which he lives is secured against capricious action of his employer. After a cottager has been in occupation twelve months, if the tenancy is continued and the cottager remains in the service of the same farmer, his rent is reduced by one pound a year. This has been found to be advantageous to farmer and labourer alike, as is shown by the fact that the average occupation of each cottage is more than thirteen years."

This chapter may fittingly close with a record of that which Kenyon-Slaney undoubtedly regarded as the happiest event of his life. In December, 1886, he became engaged to Lady Mabel Bridgeman, elder daughter of the third Earl of Bradford. The members of the two families had long been close friends, as they were close neighbours, and much pleasant intercourse had been the rule between Weston and Hatton. This is not the place, nor is the present writer the person, to write at length of the union which was completed in Weston Church on February 22, 1887. The home life of these two, surely one of the happiest that ever befel

those who as man and wife "make the inevitable sweet surrender," will be treated in another chapter by another hand—the hand of one who, from close relationship, has the right to speak, and to tell of the unclouded happiness which shone upon twenty-one years of married life. Most of the letters at this period from Kenyon-Slaney to his future wife are far too intimate to be quoted here, but it may not be impertinent to give one or two short extracts, which will speak for themselves.

"*Hatton, January* 11, 1887 (*written just after the announcement of the engagement*).—I am trying hard to concentrate my attention on to-night's speech, but it is not a bit of use. Foreign policy, Randolph Churchill, Local Government—it does not matter a bit which—in you come and away they go. . . . But it will all come right. I shall think of you. I shall know you are thinking of me, and surely I cannot fail."

"*January* 12.—Our meeting for such an evening was quite a wonderful success. . . . My very first words were of you in response to an allusion to us from the chairman, which was cheered to the echo."

"*February* 22, 1887 (*the wedding day*).—How I join with you in your prayers that God will give us His blessing, and make our life together not

only happy, as surely it must be, for ourselves, but a cause of happiness to others also."

What the answer to the prayer was is shown in the following few lines, written by Kenyon-Slaney to Lady Mabel twenty years after :

"*Riby Grove, Grimsby, February* 24, 1907.—I am glad you liked the lilies and this little reminder of that first happy day, which has lengthened and broadened into these twenty happy years."

CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND THE PLATFORM

"I live for those that love me,
For those that know me true,
For the wrong that needs resistance,
For the cause that needs assistance,
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do."

G. L. Banks.

When Kenyon-Slaney first went to school, he wrote home to say that all the boys there were either Whigs or Tories, and to ask which he was. Whereupon his father, who had no intention of carrying on the traditions of his father-in-law,* the Whig Member for Shrewsbury, answered promptly that he was a Tory, and was to take care not to forget it. In this, as in other things, Kenyon-Slaney observed the Fifth Commandment with scrupulous care and unswerving tenacity. His first appearance as a candidate for Parliament was in May, 1885, when he came forward to contest the

* Mr. R. A. Slaney.

Wellington Division of Shropshire against Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Hargreaves Brown, who before the redistribution had been the senior member for Wenlock. The Conservative Association for the division had some doubts as to the wisdom of fighting a seat which it was thought impossible to win, but subsequently adopted Kenyon-Slaney by a unanimous vote. The candidate set to work with his usual vigour, having explained the conditions on which he would agree to stand in a private letter to the chairman, which contained these words: "I will only fight a perfectly square fight. I will neither allow nor wink at any doubtful practice, and if I can't come out with clean hands, I won't have anything to do with it."

It need hardly be said that he carefully adhered to these rules of the ring in every fight in which he engaged.

His address to the electors contains the first sign of his views on Tariff Reform: "As to trade," he says, "at present the foreigner is protected; the Englishman is left in the cold. Ought we not to have at least fair play?"

It was an uphill struggle, and he had continually to face hostile and even rowdy audiences. But his good temper, readiness of repartee, and plain-

ness of speech, won him great popularity even amongst his opponents. At one meeting he had a hard task to secure attention, but, having at last succeeded in wearing down the opposition, he received the following compliment from an old man in the audience, who rose and said: "Well, Colonel, we wunna' say as we'll vote for yer, and we wunna' say as we wunna', but we dunna' mind yer." It was clear, as the contest drew to an end, that he had made a considerable impression on the electors. Hopes were entertained that the finish would be close, and one enthusiastic supporter sent him the following missive: "Colonel Slaney, the Torys love you, the nuteral men delight in you, the Radicals are frightened at you, your chance is sure, thank God.—A WORKING MAN." But his friend expected too much, and when the poll was declared, it was:

Brown	4,801
Kenyon-Slaney	2,571
Liberal majority	2,230

This was a severe defeat, but he took it philosophically, and there is little doubt that in this election the foundation of his popularity on the platform was well and truly laid. His courage in fighting at all, his clean hitting, and the conviction

with which he expressed his views, were the subject of conversation all over the county. From this moment he was regarded by Salopians as the coming man.

Nor had he long to wait, for the conversion of Mr. Gladstone to Home Rule brought about the crisis of 1886 and another General Election.

In the adjoining constituency of Newport Mr. Bickersteth, a moderate Liberal, had defeated Lord Newport (one of the sitting members for North Shropshire before the division of the county) by 361 votes. It had not, therefore, been proved that the Newport Division was anything but a Liberal seat. Kenyon-Slaney had been working and speaking in the constituency for some little time, and the reputation gained in his gallant assault on Wellington was fresh in everyone's mind, and gave him a claim on the party.

On March 13, 1886, a meeting was held at Shrewsbury for the selection of a candidate, under the chairmanship of Colonel Charles Wingfield of Onslow, then and for many years afterwards a tower of strength and an indefatigable worker for the party in the Newport Division. Three names were proposed: Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Sir Thomas Boughey of Aqualate, and Mr. Corbet of Adderley. The proposers of the two last-named

gentlemen withdrew their names, explaining that they had only been adopted at local meetings at Newport and Market Drayton respectively, in the belief that Colonel Kenyon-Slaney did not intend to come forward.

The course being clear, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney was unanimously adopted as candidate.

Mr. Bickersteth about this time had occasion to address a letter to Kenyon-Slaney expressive of gratitude for the courtesy of some previous communication received from him. This letter ends with these words: "Whatever happens, I know that if I have you for my antagonist, the fight will be conducted, as far as the principal combatants are concerned, in a perfectly fair and straightforward manner, and I shall not forget what I owe to you for the open and generous way in which you have always treated me." But they were not destined to be antagonists. In a few weeks the famous secession of the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Chamberlain, and other leading Liberals from Mr. Gladstone's camp took place, and Mr. Bickersteth threw in his lot with the seceders.

The Liberal party had to find a Home Rule candidate for Newport, and their choice fell upon Mr. Clement Higgins, Q.C., who came down at

the last moment with a recipe of his own concoction, labelled, "How to win a Shropshire seat in seven days." Among the attractions which he offered was the old "three acres and a cow," but, apart from this, there was not much to attract a Shropshire voter to the side of a complete stranger.

In Kenyon-Slaney's address, of course, opposition to Home Rule was the *pièce de résistance.* It contained, also, one or two items which are interesting in view of subsequent events in his career. "On religious questions," he wrote, "I hold broad views, and my hearty support would be given to such measures of internal reform within the Church as would bring her still more thoroughly in touch with the needs of the people, and would tend to insure that mutual respect and good feeling between church and chapel, each acknowledging the other's rights, which is essential to the maintenance of a true and charitable religion amongst us." It is not difficult to discern in these words the spirit which inspired him to move the Kenyon-Slaney clause in the Education Act of 1902.

Again, we can see the origin of the imperial programme which formed so prominent a feature of his campaign of 1906 in the words: "I believe that the time has come for an earnest effort to

unite our Colonial Empire more closely to the mother country."

He never looked like losing; the figures were:

Kenyon-Slaney	4,460
Higgins	2,884
Unionist majority	1,576

And so he entered Parliament, where his career forms the subject of another chapter.

His next contest was in 1892, and his opponent this time was a man well known in Shropshire, Mr. W. H. Lander, who came forward more in the interest of tenant farmers than as a party politician; indeed, he became later on, in 1906, one of the Colonel's warmest supporters in the cause of Tariff Reform.

Mr. Lander was a much more formidable opponent than Mr. Higgins, and the fight, which was a keen one, drew out Kenyon-Slaney's best fighting instincts. Many of his hearers will remember his ready replies to interruptions, but it may not be out of place to quote one here, which is characteristic. The Colonel said in the course of a speech: "It seems that certain people are ready to shut their eyes and swallow any dose given to them by a Radical." A voice: "We can't take

your pills." The Colonel: "You would probably be purged of a great deal of nonsense, and be a much healthier man to-morrow, if you did."

The swing of the pendulum, after six years of Conservative rule, was against him, but he carried all before him, and won by a handsome majority.

Kenyon-Slaney	4,815
Lander	3,530
Unionist majority	1,285

He was now firm in the saddle, and for fourteen years rode triumphantly at the head of Shropshire Conservatives without a check. He was closely in touch with his constituents, a large number of whom he could reckon among his personal friends, and was possessed of a great gift for remembering both names and faces.

"The Colonel," as he was always known, "seems to belong to us," said a working man; and, indeed, at any public gathering his appearance seemed to bring a smile to every face. His seat was uncontested in 1895 and 1900, and a feeling of security settled down on his supporters which nearly brought disaster in 1906.

It was during this period of tranquillity that the first highly organized attempt to wrest the county from its allegiance to Conservatism was planned

under the guidance of Mr. (afterwards Sir Alfred) Billson, a very old hand at party politics, who had taken a lease of Rowton Castle. Candidates were found for all the divisions, money appeared plentiful, all the Radical machinery was oiled and brought up-to-date, and in the course of time Mr. Francis Neilson was adopted as Radical candidate for the Newport Division.

Their first opportunity arose in the Oswestry Division on the death of Mr. Stanley Leighton in 1901, and Mr. Bright, who had been doing a good deal of work in the constituency, was brought out in opposition to Mr. Ormsby-Gore (now Lord Harlech); but the war feeling still ran high, a "stop-the-war" candidate had little chance against a well-known local man, and the Radicals were defeated by a four-figure majority.

The next chance came on the death of Mr. Jasper More, who had represented the Ludlow Division for many years, first as a Liberal, then as a Liberal Unionist. This seemed more hopeful for the attacking party, as the Unionists were without a candidate, and the Radicals were ready with Mr. F. Horne, a tenant of Colonel Kenyon-Slaney's farm at Hinnington. The Unionists, however, were fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Rowland Hunt, a popular master of

hounds and a keen politician, and again the seat was held for the Government by nearly 1,000 votes.

By this time political feeling in Shropshire was beginning to run high, and the Radical attack was developed all round, the chief feature of their programme being a pronounced and violent attack on landlords and the system of land tenure, on the platform and elsewhere.

These attacks were much resented by Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, an excellent landlord, who rightly believed that the vast majority of other landowners in the county were the same. He retaliated with vigorous retorts on the new-comers from London and Liverpool, who led the opposing faction. But the climax of bitterness was not reached till 1904, when, armed with pictures of Chinese slaves in chains and the big and little loaf, the Radicals succeeded in capturing the Oswestry seat, which had become vacant on the death of Lord Harlech.

It is at this point that it seems necessary to give some account of the Horne and Kenyon-Slaney incident, which aroused so much interest in the county and elsewhere, and out of which so much political capital was made. We do not desire to reopen an old controversy, but it is only fair that the essential facts of the case which have been

published in the Press from time to time should here be summarized as briefly as possible.

When Mr. Horne was contesting Ludlow, the Colonel had been active on the other side; nevertheless, Mr. Horne was able to write shortly afterwards to his landlord: "From all I heard of your speeches, I have to thank you for the very friendly tone you adopted towards me." About the beginning of 1904, however, a notice appeared in a local paper that Mr. Horne intended to fight Ludlow again, and to take up his residence in that constituency. Whereupon Colonel Kenyon-Slaney wrote through his agent to Mr. Horne, stating that he had heard Mr. Horne had expressed his intention of residing in the Ludlow Division, and that if it would be more convenient to him, he would waive his right to a longer notice, and make arrangements for relieving him of the farm at Lady Day. To this Mr. Horne replied that the report was entirely false, that he had no wish to leave Hinnington, but that he intended to assist in the campaign in the Newport Division against the Colonel, as well as to continue to work in Ludlow. He added, further, that if his continuance caused annoyance to the Colonel, *he would much rather try to terminate their connection amicably than risk any probability of friction in the future.*

With characteristic candour, the Colonel replied that he would answer frankly, and hoped that his plain-speaking would not be mistaken for want of courtesy. He then proceeded to point out that candidature for another constituency would not be compatible with personal superintendence of his farm ; that his active support of Mr. Neilson was likely to endanger the future relations between them ; and that though Mr. Horne himself might abstain from personal attacks on him and other landlords, yet his close association with those who did make those attacks could not fail to make their respective positions as landlord and tenant very unpleasant. He ended by declaring that if Mr. Horne thought fit to stay, he should not interfere with him, and that if he went he should wish him success in any walk of life except politics.

It is hard to understand, when one looks at the closing words of Mr. Horne's last letter quoted above in italics, why he chose to stay on ; but stay he did, and the political strife waxed hotter and hotter all over the county. The landlords were attacked with increasing bitterness, and after the Oswestry success the Radicals took heart, and carried on the battle vehemently all along the line.

Naturally the mutual irritation did not subside, and in January, 1905, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney wrote to his agent, regretting that he could not attend his rent-dinner, because "the fact that one of his tenants found his chief occupation in denouncing landlords, and yet had not sufficient self-respect to give up his holding," made it difficult and unpleasant to attend such gatherings.

It would have required the patience of Job to refrain from hurling back some sharp rejoinders against his tormentors, and, indeed, Job was not above making a good repartee when opportunity offered. So, too, the Colonel got in a few smart thrusts on the platform, but he had been studiously careful to avoid anything of an offensive nature in his correspondence with Mr. Horne.

The contents of this letter, which, though not addressed to Mr. Horne, soon reached his ears, gave his political friends the opportunity for which they seemed to be waiting to represent him in the attitude of a martyr, and of which they were not slow to take advantage. Mr. Horne, whose ears had not previously appeared attentive to suggestion, at once announced that he could not disregard such a hint as this, and offered to give up the farm on conditions which were certainly not disadvantageous to himself, and which were

accepted and fulfilled to the letter by Colonel Kenyon-Slaney.

Thus was provided a fertile theme for Radical orators in Shropshire and outside—a theme which was used to the full, and, indeed, beyond all reasonable measure, in the attempt to capture the Newport seat.

After Mr. Horne left his farm, he made a series of attacks on Colonel Kenyon-Slaney as a landlord in the Press and elsewhere, which he probably regrets now as much as anyone. But the other tenants on the estate came to the support of their landlord, and wrote him a letter, signed by every tenant except one (a near relative of Mr. Horne), disapproving of the "virulent attacks," and placing on record "that they had always found him just and generous in the administration of his estate, kindly and considerate in his personal relations, and absolutely uninfluenced in his dealings with them by any difference in their political and religious views." To one who with perfect justice could take pride in his generosity as a landlord, the use made of this episode was naturally most painful, touching, as it did, a most sensitive spot in his nature. But he was always deeply affected by any expression of kindly feeling, and this letter from his tenants did much to relieve the irritation.

It helped him to retain his self-control amidst the incessant baiting, in and out of Parliament, to which he was now subjected, and which it was hard to endure with patience.

From 1904 onwards it was never certain that an election might not be at hand, and Colonel Kenyon-Slaney was torn in two by his strict sense of duty in attending the House of Commons and the urgent appeals from his constituents to make more frequent appearances in their midst. He had always relied more on his own exertions than on any organization in the past, and he knew now that if he had the time to devote to his constituents, his own personal popularity would reassert itself and carry him through. Thus he had a difficult race to ride. While sticking loyally to his work in the House, by great exertions he just gave himself time enough in the constituency to win cleverly by a short head. The figures of the 1906 election were:

Kenyon-Slaney	4,848
Neilson	4,682
Conservative majority ...	166

Very soon after the declaration of the poll a most persistent rumour that he had been killed spread all over the county, and wherever he went

that day he was greeted with much amazement, followed by genuine outbursts of joy and relief at his safety.

As a matter of fact, no sooner had he won than he started off, exhausted as he was, to help his friends in other parts. And here it seems appropriate to say a few words about him as a platform speaker.

It is generally admitted that he stood in the first rank of public speakers in England, and this is borne out by the magnificent receptions he received, often when called upon to speak in difficult times and dangerous places. There were few places to which he went where he was not implored to return, and the demand for his services was enormous.

His success was due to a certain directness of style, to intense belief in the principles he advocated, and to a remarkable power of touching the feelings of his audience and securing their sympathy.

Invariably fluent, his speeches often contained great felicity of expression, and he was never at a loss for a repartee. Nor should the power of his voice be forgotten as a factor in his success. Its tone was pleasant and well modulated; its carrying power was astounding, and invaluable at

HATTON GRANGE.

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open-air meetings; while its ring was the ring of true metal, unmistakable in its sincerity and strength.

An amusing story is told of a Primrose League meeting which he addressed at a large country house. A younger son of the family, not caring for politics, was spending the afternoon in stalking rabbits in the park some half-mile from the meeting. He declares that when the earlier speeches were being made his sport prospered fairly well, but that when Colonel Kenyon-Slaney warmed up every rabbit took to the ground, and he had to give it up.

He often introduced a good story, and when he did it was always one which his audience could appreciate. It was at almost his last appearance on the platform at the South Herefordshire election that he brought down the house with this remark: "As I stood the other day at the end of a covert missing the cock-pheasants, I came to the conclusion that I was making the same mistake as you made with the Radical party last election—paying too much attention to their long tails (tales), and not noticing the smallness of their heads."

The following reply to a supporter who had asked advice is interesting as defining his attitude

on Tariff Reform as an indispensable part of the Unionist programme:

"I have but time to reply briefly to your letter. I personally regard any platform of Unionist policy which does not include the principles of Tariff Reform as worthless and hopeless—as a tree without sap, from which neither leaf, nor fruit, nor flowers can be expected. I therefore consider the inclusion of Tariff Reform as essential to any stand on behalf of Church, land, education, unity of Kingdom, maintenance of Empire, preservation of throne, and continuance of institutions—in fact, of all the main tenets of the Conservative and Unionist Party. I therefore feel bound to take a positive and not a negative attitude in its support. At the same time I am entirely opposed to any ostracism from the party of any who, being Unionist on other points, are still unable to adopt Tariff Reform, and I should oppose any such action to the best of my ability, even perhaps to the length of resigning my Vice-Presidency if it was insisted on.

"I am convinced that to appeal to the electorate without some such policy as is meant by Tariff Reform, and only on grounds of defence and of anti-Socialism, would be to court crushing, if not final defeat. I therefore advocate Tariff Reform, not

only on its own merits, but because it is the only policy which can effectively safeguard those other principles on which all Unionists are in accord. If I am right in this view of the situation, then I think we are entitled to ask the small minority of our party to realize that, without us, they are impotent to avert disaster, and to regulate both their actions and their language in accordance with the grave realities of our common position.

"In your case, if you do not feel strongly enough on the subject, I think it would be a perfectly sufficient and perfectly proper reply to say briefly that, while fully hoping to support a well-considered policy of Tariff Reform, you did not at present wish to identify yourself absolutely with the League.

"It is most perplexing to me that, while the fundamental idea of Tariff Reform is to cheapen the necessities of life, and to obtain a revenue out of which social advantages may be obtained for our people, we are denounced as advocates of dearer food, and of all which is the exact opposite of our belief and our intention."

When Mr. Balfour went to address the National Union of Conservative Associations at Birmingham in November, 1907, and the Midland Tariff Reformers were longing to hear his views on fiscal

questions, he did not disappoint them, and Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, who was chosen to second the vote of thanks, made this happy reference to the fact : " This is a great occasion, this is a great gathering, and we have heard a great political speech delivered by a great man. The echoes of that speech will be carried further than Birmingham, further than Great Britain and Ireland. They will ring throughout the Empire as the real genuine feeling of the best part of the British people. If we, as Unionists, represent the common-sense of the Empire, we have at our head the rarest and greatest intellect of the day. One of the cleverest of our opponents recently quoted : ' The beast has grown more and more, and man has waxed less and less ' ; but he left out the last three words—' till Arthur comes.' Yes, till Arthur comes we are likely to continue in the wilderness. Arthur is coming, and when he comes he will bring with him prosperity to the people and increasing power to the Empire."

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS AND PARLIAMENT

"His . . . fine sense of right
And Truth's directness, meeting each occasion,
Straight as a line of light."

J. G. WHITTIER.

THOUGH no one will dispute that Kenyon-Slaney's brilliant speeches on the platform were the most conspicuous part of his political career, it must not be forgotten that he rendered loyal and distinguished service in the House of Commons, where he was always ready to defend the cause he believed to be right in fair weather or in foul. Mr. Walter Long, an intimate friend and colleague, writes:

"When he entered the House of Commons, he did so with the steadfast determination to do his duty—to fight for the cause in which he really believed—and from the beginning to the end he never swerved from his determination. He was a most admirable speaker—one of the best and most attractive platform speakers that our party

had. He could hold an audience, however difficult it was, while he dealt vigorously with the political situation, attacking what he believed to be the errors and mistakes of his opponents. He never minced his words, and never attempted to conceal his real views. He spoke generally with warmth and vehemence ; but there was something about the man—mainly, I think, his unmistakable sincerity and his conviction that the views he held were right—which compelled the respectful attention of those who listened, however much they might disagree with him.

" In the House of Commons it was the same thing. He was universally popular, not because he was all things to all men, but because he was always fair, always honest, always straightforward. More than once in the House of Commons, although it was after he had been there some years, and was entitled to such privileges as belong to age, accompanied by Privy Councillor's rank, he took upon himself willingly, without hesitation, the disagreeable task of speaking at a time when the House might be thin, or when popular feeling was going strong against the cause he represented. Nothing ever daunted him ; he knew no fear, his industry was amazing, and his grasp of various subjects which he took up was considerable. I

do not hesitate to say that in all my Parliamentary experience I have never known a man to combine more fully than he did the best qualities which go to make a thorough and genuine representative of all that is best in our race.

"To the Unionist party the death of Kenyon-Slaney came as a very great blow. He was one of our most active and strenuous workers, rarely, if ever, absent from the House of Commons, whatever might have been the personal inconvenience to himself. I remember how, in the Session of 1907, having been present regularly throughout the whole of those long sittings in committee on the Scotch Small Holdings Bill, in which he rendered splendid service to the cause of fair-play, that towards the end he talked to me with real anxiety as to what he was to do in August. His boy would be home for the holidays, and he was desperately eager to take a hand himself in training him on the cricket-field, for he saw that the lad had within him the promise of cricket excellence, and he was very anxious that he should not misuse his holiday opportunities. Yet Slaney felt that it was his duty to be in the House of Commons to take his share of the work there, and on several occasions he anxiously discussed with me what it was best to do. I told

him that he had done his full share of the work ; that he had borne the burden and heat of the day during the Session ; that he had rarely, if ever, been absent from the Committee ; that he had not failed to do his work in the House of Commons afterwards, and I thought that now he might fairly take a rest from his labours and devote himself to the legitimate task of caring for his boy in his holidays. I remember well the wistful look with which he asked me if I really thought that this would be doing his duty as a Member of Parliament. I assured him that I did so think, and he appeared satisfied for the time. But, notwithstanding the strength of the inducements to be at home, he contrived to make frequent appearances in the House of Commons, and to continue to do his duty there, while he was also able, at no little cost to himself of personal fatigue, to take some part in the work at home which was so near his heart.

"The more men we can have like Willie Kenyon-Slaney, the better it must be for England."

It was not long after his entrance into Parliament that Kenyon-Slaney made his maiden speech (September 8, 1886) in Committee of Supply, urging the War Office to provide a recreation ground for the garrison of London. There, as

ever after, we find him ready to take up the cudgels for his fellow-soldier, and to argue his case with wholesome common-sense. In presenting his case he used these words:

"There are certain newspapers which seem to be ready to take every opportunity of condemning the conduct of soldiers who form part of the garrison of the Metropolis. I think if those who make these attacks were also acquainted with the great temptations to which soldiers are exposed, and the great want of those national recreations which are the safeguard against temptation, that they would not be so willing to withhold their approval from such a plan as I propose."

In November, 1890, he was selected as mover of the address in reply to the Queen's speech. In inviting him to do so, Mr. W. H. Smith wrote: "I turn to you, as one of our warmest and most ardent supporters, to make the first speech."

This was the first occasion on which it was moved in the short form of one sentence expressive of thanks, which has since prevailed. In this very thankless task he acquitted himself with distinct success, speaking from brief notes, on each page of which he had written "slow" to remind himself to avoid a temptation to hurry, caused by his fluency of utterance.

The honour of being selected for the post is probably the chief, if not the only, satisfaction to be derived from this solemn function.

In July of the same year he gave the House an example of the warmth of his feelings when defending his friends from an unjust attack. Mr. Hanbury had stated that officers of the Guards did not return salutes, and so behaved "in a manner unworthy of officers and gentlemen." Kenyon-Slaney rose to try to get an apology from Mr. Hanbury, and in the course of his speech observed that "he was a better critic of contracts than of conduct." Mr. Hanbury and he must have left the House about the same time, for the next day, when the subject again rose, he retorted that he had noticed Mr. Hanbury pass a policeman on duty at the House without returning his salute, and that such conduct was equally unworthy of a legislator and a gentleman. The temperature of his righteous indignation on this occasion may be gauged by his reply to some interruption from Sir G. Campbell that "he was more celebrated for prolixity in debate than accuracy of statement."

About this time Colonel Kenyon-Slaney made frequent speeches on agriculture, the army, Ireland, and the death duties. He also took a great interest in the question of pure beer, introducing

a Pure Beer Bill himself, and speaking whenever others introduced the subject. It was his great pleasure to practise what he preached. Beer made solely from malt and hops was always on tap at Hatton, and very good it was.

An amusing episode is related of him in the *St. James's Gazette* of February 13, 1897, illustrating the strength of his voice, to which reference has been made in another chapter :

"Colonel Kenyon-Slaney unintentionally gave the House the pleasure of a hearty laugh last night. It is his good or bad fortune to possess a voice which must be capable of carrying across any parade-ground in the United Kingdom, and last night he did not spare it. Suddenly, without changing his note in the slightest, he offered to 'whisper' a piece of advice in the ear of the Government. The roar of laughter which burst forth from all parts of the House was the only real bit of relief in a most serious evening."

It was on October 20, 1899, that Kenyon-Slaney was probably seen at his best in the House of Commons, touching a note which found an echo in every heart. In the course of an acrimonious discussion on the expenses of the South African War, on the day of the Battle of Glencoe, at the very beginning of the campaign, he rose to

make an appeal to the House which may well be quoted from Hansard in full:

"I rise simply to give utterance to the thought that is in the minds of every soldier in the House —namely, that it is a thousand pities, on an evening when news of so momentous a character, affecting the lives of so many near and dear to us, is trembling on the telegraph-wire, we should indulge in anything like unseemly controversy, or that we should bandy across the floor of the House repartees and accusations which in cooler moments we must be sorry to have uttered. I am not presuming to say on which side the blame lies; but speaking as a soldier, and feeling, therefore, very strongly the crisis of the moment, I hope that members, on whatever side of the House they sit, will be able to put some little check upon their language; that they may recollect, however strong their feelings may be, surely these may be hushed to-night, in the face of the news which we have heard and are likely to hear, and out of respect to the memory of those who have fallen—gallant men on the other side as well as on our own, for soldiers are the last to deny to gallant opponents their full meed of praise. Humble member as I am, I believe that I identify myself with the feeling of the House and the

country in wishing at this moment controversy may be hushed, and in stating that we Englishmen are proud to-night to know that the victory, however much it has cost us, has been won by the gallantry of our Irish brother-soldiers as well as by our own."

In these plain words a true heart poured out the simplicity of its emotion, and so electrical was the effect of this one touch of nature that Mr. Dillon rose from the Irish benches to express his pleasure at the speech.

"The hon. member had spoken as a generous and gallant soldier, because he recognized the qualities of his enemies as a brave soldier ought to do. If the debate had been conducted throughout in that tone and temper, many bitter things which had fallen from both sides might have been left unsaid."

On February 3, 1902, Kenyon-Slaney was again up in arms in defence of General Truman and the Remount Committee against the attacks of Mr. Bowles and others. He was interrupted more than once in the course of his speech by the member for King's Lynn, whose recent conduct he regarded as disloyal to his party, and, waxing indignant, he exclaimed: "We do not all of us suffer from sore heads; we do not all of us

suffer from swelled heads; and I only hope that when the hon. member again addresses himself to that sort of subject he will be a little more careful as to the epithets he uses and the words that fall from his lips."

A few days later the case of Major Peters was being discussed, and many unworthy insinuations made. "Les absents ont toujours tort" was a proverb popular at that time amongst a certain set in the House, but highly distasteful to Kenyon-Slaney, and he had a sharp skirmish with Mr. Labouchere over the case, which was subsequently continued on the platform and in the Press. But Kenyon-Slaney held his own with tenacity, and even so astute a controversialist as Mr. Labouchere found himself unable to score against the plain-spoken Colonel.

Kenyon-Slaney's conduct on this occasion elicited a private letter from an admirer in these terms:

"Well spoken, Colonel! A good, manly speech defending an absent soldier who was not able to defend himself. I don't know Major Peters either, but you knocked the cowards who would stab him in the back."

Education was not one of the political subjects in which Kenyon-Slaney took the keenest interest,

or professed to possess any exceptional experience. Yet by a strange fate the circumstances which will connect his name most closely with the legislation of the country is the Kenyon-Slaney clause in the Education Act of 1902, which became the subject of discussion as heated as that which raged over the Cowper-Temple clause in the Act of 1870.

This famous amendment was originally an addition to Clause 8 of the Bill, but in the final form in which the Act passed it forms part of Section 7. It enacted that "religious instruction shall be given in a school not provided by the local education authority in accordance with the tenor of the provisions (if any) of the trust-deed relating thereto, and shall be under the control of the managers," and was carried in committee by a majority of 211 to 41, with the consent of the Government, who undoubtedly encouraged him to move it. His object in doing so was to satisfy the opponents of the measure that there would be no danger of the denominational schools falling under the absolute control of individual clergymen, and to impose a check upon the action of the clergy of extreme opinions and practices.

On the other hand, it was felt by many Churchmen that in substance the trust-deeds were being overridden, that the interpretation of what was, or

was not, in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England was being left to the decision of a majority of managers, who might, and often would be, quite unqualified to decide such a question, and of whom two might be members of any other religious body or of none.

Colonel Kenyon-Slaney claimed for his clause that it "provided against the possible abuse of the powers at present possessed by certain extreme-minded men. The great body of clergy were absolutely trustworthy, but there might be cases of wrong-headedness and narrow-mindedness." Mr. Cripps held, on the other hand, that "the clause would give unlimited opportunity for evil to extravagant and eccentric laymen, who, his experience had taught him, were much more to be feared than extravagant and eccentric clergymen."

There were animated discussions as to whether the clause admitted an appeal to the Bishop if a question of doctrine were in dispute, and "F. C. G." drew two very amusing cartoons on this aspect of the case for the *Westminster Gazette*.

The storm which the clause raised was a boisterous one, but no one could say that the tone of the speech which Kenyon-Slaney made on moving it—one of studied moderation—contri-

buted to its fury. At a later stage in the debate the correspondent of a leading London paper says:

"There are few better representatives of the admirable qualities of a typical Englishman than Colonel Kenyon-Slaney. He is shrewd, humorous, and downright, but his plain and unaffected utterance is compatible with the most studious courtesy and the most unfailing good temper. More than once he has startled and moved the House with spontaneous bursts of eloquence, inspired simply by sincere feeling, and to-day he won general admiration by his straightforward and extremely tactful presentation of a very difficult case. He won attention and sympathy at once by the humour of his complaint that 'fate should have dogged him to take part in this wrangle of legal giants,' a wrangle for which he said his only qualification was that his great-grandfather was a Lord Chief Justice. There was a kindly forbearance, too, in the way in which the member for Shropshire referred to those who had threatened him with 'the severance of old friendship and the loss of old support' for the part he had taken in this controversy, and there was only a good-humoured smile for the writers of letters couched in language 'of extreme violence and even of extreme indecency.'

As a repartee nothing could have been better than his reply to the Bishop of London, who had spoken of the persons likely to control the schools in the future as 'some Squire Westerns.' Said Kenyon-Slaney: 'I know my Tom Jones as well as the Bishop of London, and I would remind his lordship that there is not only a Squire Western, but a Parson Thwackum.'"

He was the recipient of a large number of letters of protest from clergymen all over England, some expressed in language of profound sorrow, others in that of extravagant resentment. He also received many complimentary messages from both clergy and laity. Whilst one wrote of the amendment as "an insolent and God-destroying clause," it appeared to another as "the new Magna Charta of freedom." But whatever view may be taken of the controversy, it must not be thought that Kenyon-Slaney was in any sense hostile to the Church. Far from it: he was deeply attached to the Church, a most regular and devout church-goer and communicant, and whether he was right or wrong in this matter, he honestly believed that he was doing the Church a service by moving his amendment.

In November, 1902, Kenyon-Slaney was informed by his old friend and brother officer, Sir A.

Acland-Hood, then Chief Whip, that the Prime Minister desired to know whether the offer of a baronetcy would be acceptable to him. While fully appreciating the honour intended and the kindly thought which prompted it, Kenyon-Slaney was quite clear in his own mind that the proposed dignity had no attractions for him. "I would much rather," he said in a letter to his wife, informing her of the offer, "remain plain squire of Hatton, and I am sure that when my bit of time is done, it will be better for Rody* to follow me in the same position." In this view his wife fully concurred, and, as a result, the following letter was written to Sir A. Acland-Hood:

"*November* 6, 1902.

"My dear Hood,

"I have given the most careful consideration to the communication you made to me last night on behalf of the Prime Minister. Please believe that I feel most deeply, and appreciate most fully the honour of such a suggestion, and please believe, too, that the fact that it has been proposed by one old friend in the person of my Chief and Leader, and conveyed to me by another in the person of my old mate and comrade, adds immensely to the

* His boy.

pride and pleasure with which I have received it. At the same time I feel that I must beg most respectfully to be allowed to decline.

"I have not the means which would make it wise in me to undertake the additional expenses which a baronetcy would entail, and I have no wish to exchange my old squire position for anything higher or more dignified. I trust I shall not be thought to be valuing lightly the proffer of so high an honour—indeed I do not—but the circumstances of my life are such that I trust I may be permitted to serve my party to the best of my poor ability in the same position as that which I have hitherto occupied. I will therefore ask you to convey this reply to the Prime Minister, with the assurance of my most sincere gratitude and of the intense pleasure with which I shall always recall his kindness.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. KENYON-SLANEY."

Early in 1903 the case of "ragging" in the Grenadier Guards came up in the House of Commons, and fault was found with Colonel Kinloch for "handing over to the senior subaltern" a young officer whom he had censured for disobedience. Needless to say, Kenyon-Slaney stood up for the honour and credit of his regiment, and

warmly defended his brother officer in command. At the opening of Parliament in the House of Lords, and while the case was being discussed outside, but before it had been raised in Parliament, some two or three months after the passing of the Kenyon-Slaney clause, the Colonel was observed by a Liberal M.P. to be standing near a group of Bishops. "I should be careful," said he, "how I got so near those Bishops if I were Kenyon-Slaney. You know what they would do to him if they got hold of him? They would hand him over to the senior suffragan."

In 1904 the honour of a seat in the Privy Council was conferred on Colonel Kenyon-Slaney. This was a distinction after his own heart. He desired no reward for having done what he considered to be his duty, and, as was shown above, he was unwilling to accept a title which would have caused him to be no longer "plain squire of Hatton." But the Privy Councillorship, involving no change of title to himself or his descendants, was different, and the manner in which the offer was made by the Prime Minister, his old friend and school-fellow, added to the value of the distinction. "I don't overvalue it," he says in a letter to his wife, "but it would be equally wrong to undervalue what is undoubtedly in itself a high honour and distinction."

When the Liberals came into power in 1906, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney was most active in opposition, especially in Committee on the Land Tenure Bill and the Scotch Land Bill; much of his time was spent in encouraging "the youngsters," as he called them, who were trying their wings in very difficult circumstances, and who much appreciated his approbation.

No doubt if he had set himself to self-advertisement and played to the gallery, Kenyon-Slaney might have made a greater mark in Parliament than he did. But that would have been utterly alien to his character, the keynote of which was devotion to duty. He never spoke unless he thought he had something to contribute to the debate, but he never missed a chance of defending the cause of agriculture, of the army, of the Union, or of the Empire, when he conceived those causes to be in danger. Never was any member more loyal to his chief, or more ready to play the game of politics for his side rather than for his own score. His opinion was frequently consulted by many of the Front Bench men, and his advice carried the weight which sincerity and good intent always secure. He was very popular with all those who knew him well in the House, and there was no member more worthy of the full and plain

meaning of the expression "honourable and gallant gentleman."

This chapter may well close with the following appreciation from the pen of Mr. Arnold-Forster :*

"I knew Kenyon-Slaney in the House of Commons for many years. He was first elected in 1886, I in 1892 ; but it was only in later years that I became well acquainted with him. Most of my recollections of him are, I am certain, common to most other members of the House. Men on either side will always recall him as an excellent friend and a courteous opponent ; a hard fighter ; a man who was always ready to do justice to an adversary, and to accept an explanation offered in good faith. He was distinctly a popular man in the House—with many friends certainly, and with few enemies, I believe.

"It was, however, in connection with army matters that I came to be most closely associated with him, and of the part which he took in discussions on Army Estimates I can speak with knowledge. Debates on Naval and Military Estimates in the House of Commons are not exhilarating. A stranger in the gallery might sometimes believe that the only serious question with regard to the

* This appreciation was written only a few months before the lamented death of Mr. Arnold-Forster.

navy was the wages in the dockyards, and that any and every subject might legitimately be discussed on Army Estimates save the welfare of the officer and the private soldier, and the preparation of the army for war. Kenyon-Slaney never contributed to this unfortunate but too well justified impression. He had been a soldier and a Guardsman, and as such he had learnt to understand that officers and men were human beings, with very real needs and ambitions and sympathies; and also he had learnt, as few members of Parliament appear to have learnt, that discipline, training, and obedience are needed to fit an army for war. Comparatively few members heard his speeches, for audiences during military discussions are always scanty. I probably heard most of them, and I can bear testimony to the fact that whenever he spoke about army questions he spoke about real things—about officers as they are, and about private soldiers as they are. Above all—and this is what I think constitutes his principal claim to the gratitude of soldiers—he never believed in shams, and however unpopular or unfashionable his opinion might be, he never hesitated to denounce a sham in words which were perfectly clear and unmistakable. These qualities naturally impressed one who was deeply interested in sub-

jects on which Kenyon-Slaney spoke with so much frankness. I saw much more of him than in former years, and learnt to esteem him greatly. Among the many curious and absurd practices of the House of Commons was that which rendered it necessary, in order that the Government of the country might proceed, that certain wholly irrelevant speeches should be made during or immediately after the dinner-hour. Ingenuity, courage, and readiness were required in the speaker. Kenyon-Slaney brought all these qualities to the service of his party. Conviction was not required on these occasions. But, doubtless, these, and the much more important service with regard to general politics which he rendered to his party, and which won for him the honourable and deserved reward which admitted him to the Privy Council and gave him a place on the Front Bench, are recorded elsewhere in the pages of this memoir. My part is only to record my recollections of the man as I knew him. He stands out in my memory as a man of transparent sincerity, with a very high code of honour, very frank, and wholly to be trusted. As a fellow-worker with him in a cause which we both had at heart, I greatly valued his co-operation, and I deeply regret his loss."

CHAPTER V

HOME LIFE

"His home, the spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest."

MONTGOMERY.

THE marriage of Kenyon-Slaney in 1887 not only influenced his life profoundly, but was a source to him of unalloyed happiness. His character was one that was very dependent upon sympathy and congenial companionship, and this his marriage brought him in perfect measure. He was more sensitive than many people guessed, who knew only the stronger aspect of his character. To him, as to all sensitive people, sympathy meant much, and the influence of his wife's bright and sunny character helped him through many times of stress, anxiety, and disappointment. His love for her was the inspiration of much of the best work of his life, both during the long, patient time of waiting for her and in the happy years that followed, though it was not till he was able to settle

in his own home that the happiness of his life was completed and crowned.

The ideal he had set before himself of what their life together should be—an ideal well fulfilled as the years went on—is perhaps best shown by the following short extracts from letters written to his future wife just before their marriage :

"*January*, 1887.—And so I really do believe that February 22 will begin for us that new life together to which we can both look forward now so confidently, so trustfully, so reverently, and oh, so happily. . . . Our simple faith is that as long as God will let us be together we shall be able . . . to be content with whatever He sends us ; to do our duty in whatever place He puts us, and through storm and sunshine, darkness and light, success and disappointment, to be very happy side by side. . . ."

"*February*, 1887.—God help me to be some day to you what you have ever been to me, my guiding-star in every effort worth making that I have ever made."

For the first ten years after his marriage Kenyon-Slaney and his wife had no actual home of their own, but they made their headquarters, for the most part, with her parents at Weston or in London, with long visits to Hatton interspersed.

His mother died in 1896, and the following eighteen months were given up to alterations, improvements, and additions at Hatton, so it was not till the summer of 1898 that he at last actually settled in his own home—a home which few men were more thoroughly fitted to enjoy. He had always dearly loved Hatton ; every feature of the place, every tree and field, had to him happy memories of boyhood and youth. From that time, perhaps, began the happiest period of his happy life, and it was touching to those who looked on to see how from that time he bent all his powers and thought to making the home in which so much of his affection centred and the life there as perfect as he could for the three so dear to him. Indeed, during those years his own whole nature seemed to expand, to be mellowed and softened. It was a short time, a bare ten years. The summons of death came, and the place upon which he spent so much loving care and thought sees him now no more, though to those who knew him at Hatton it can never lose the impress of his cheery and genial personality.

The following letter, written to his wife in June, 1898, shows how greatly he had been longing for their home life at Hatton to begin :

IN HATTON DINGLE.

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"*House of Commons, June* 29, 1898.—. . . I won't attempt a long letter, as you would scarcely have time to read it; and, besides, I have only room in my heart for the one thought that, please God and thank God, our home life will begin to-morrow. Through all these years, happy as they have been, I have had such a longing for this, and now I seem to have but the one wish, that for you and for the young ones I may be permitted to make it bright and blessed."

How entirely this wish was fulfilled all who in any way shared or witnessed that home life can bear testimony. One who knew it perhaps more intimately than anyone else spoke of it as being "so intensely happy and so really uncommon in its simpleness and unselfishness, and yet at the same time the centre of such a large life and influence." Everyone seems to have carried away the same impression of its cheerfulness and brightness. There was a fresh, exhilarating atmosphere about it; it was full of enjoyment, full of interests. Those who came under the spell of its influence felt what a good and pleasant thing life can be. And yet, behind it all, you were conscious of a more serious side to the life—of a high aim, a strong purpose, the wide outlook of a keen eye and a strong brain; conscious, also, of a kindly

helping-hand always at the service of friend or neighbour.

The welfare and happiness of his poorer neighbours, too—of the tenants and cottagers on the estate—was very close to his heart. He was most anxious that, as far as it was in his power to insure it, their homes and surroundings should be as good as he could make them ; and he often used to say that he should not like to make his own home comfortable unless he were able to do the same for those who lived on the place. He knew them all personally, had always a little cheery word of greeting and interest for them when they met, and in times of trouble they all felt that they had in him a just landlord and a wise, sympathetic, and helpful friend. Gradually every poor or inadequate cottage upon the estate was either pulled down and a better one built, or else altered, added to, and converted into what might be a comfortable and healthy home if the tenants would have it so. He was generous, too, in the matter of wages, and, in recognition of long and good service, anxious that life and work upon "the land" should be made attractive, and should carry with it a wage sufficient to insure some measure of comfort for the labourer and his family.

Writing to Mr. Stanier on May 8, 1905,

Kenyon-Slaney says: "My arrangement with my agricultural and rural labourers is this: Above and beyond the ordinary local rate of wage I give a rise of sixpence per week at the end of every completed and uninterrupted period of five years' service with me, beginning at the age of twenty and ending at sixty. I don't say the rise is on an heroic scale, but I put it on that scale because I think it within the power of a farmer to adopt it with distinct advantage to himself, because of the extra value to him of the older hand."

Another thing which was at once observable in the home atmosphere of Hatton was its mutual confidence, friendship, and sympathy—the secret, to a great extent, of its charm. With the children, as they grew older, the usual relationship of father and mother, beautiful and perfect as that had always been between them, developed gradually on both sides into that still more perfect thing—friendship. It was delightful to see Kenyon-Slaney with his boy. His love for him spoke in look and voice and gesture, yet it was a love that never degenerated into spoiling, or lost sight of the necessity that rules should be obeyed, for, indeed, he had always in his mind that which might best secure the happiness and success in life of his son. A friend who wrote to R.O.R.K.-S.

(the boy) at the time of his father's death said:

"The last day in Scotland he talked to me about you, and how you and he were real friends, and not 'merely' father and son, and it was delightful to see his trust and pride in you and your future. It must be some happiness in your sorrow to feel that you have been a happiness to him."

He and his daughter, too, were real friends and companions. She took a keen and vivid interest in all his political life, and could often help him by remembering small details as to meetings, speeches, and so on. She was constantly about with him when he was at home—in his strolls with field-glass, spud, or fishing-rod.

"We have been so very, very happy, we four. I cannot think what life will be without him," she wrote to an aunt after his death.

It was the consciousness partly, no doubt, of how he was helped by sympathy himself that made him give it out in such large measure to those who shared his life. And not to his own immediate little circle only: he always liked to keep in close touch with the interests and doings of all his brothers and sisters and their belongings, and used often to complain that they did not

keep him sufficiently informed of their goings and comings and doings. Great, too, was his enjoyment of the quiet beauty of his home surroundings. More and more, as the years went on, he grew to dislike London and the life there. He hailed with joy every possible opportunity of escape from it, if only for a few hours, and the satisfaction with which, on arriving at home on summer evenings, he would get into his country clothes and be off in a dilapidated old straw hat, with his beloved glasses over his shoulder, spud in hand, and Vic the terrier at his heels, was good to see. To him a country stroll meant always much of absolute, pure enjoyment. Everything in nature attracted him, whether in the bird, animal, or plant world. It was impossible for him to be dull at Hatton, because there lay the main interests and affections of his life. It was wonderful how he seemed able to throw off all the immediate cares, anxieties, and occupations (interesting and engrossing as these all were to him) of his very busy life, and steep himself, body and spirit, in the quiet beauty and joy of the country-side and garden.

The garden, his wife's especial delight and hobby, grew to be almost as much to him as to her. He loved planning with her all the little

improvements and developments in it, and was as keen about the success in growing any new plants and flowers, or about some fresh experiment in colour effects, as she was. But he often used to say, laughing, when he was going away, that when she and the gardener and the "clippers" were left alone together, he never knew what he should find had happened when he got back, or what shocks would be in store for him as he traced "the track of the storm."

One or two letters written by Kenyon-Slaney to his wife, and describing his enjoyment of quiet days spent at Hatton, will illustrate what has been said:

"*Hatton, March* 17, 1906.—Quite a lovely day, with bright sun and a rather high wind, but not cold. A good day for the country, which wants to dry a bit. I met hounds at the Hem—not a big field. We marked a fox in a hole at the Hem, found at Sutton Wood, and ran back by the Hem, over the line by Haughton towards Decker Hill, and lost; then to the Hem Gorse—blank; and then they went to Apley, and I came home.

"After an early tea I went round the garden with Risebrow. All in best of order; but I think things are a month forward of last year,

and so I fear you won't see much of the spring flowers. Croci are still very gay, but we have too much white and grey and too little purple and yellow for full effect. The daffodils are beginning to come out, both double and single, and can hardly last till Easter. The narcissus are not so advanced. The scillas on the rookery are very bright, and the dark-blue primroses well out. The paler variety, a few wild primroses, are blooming too, and the ribes will be out in a week. Fruit-trees are promising well, and so are the roses; indeed, everything looks dangerously well. Vic seems very flourishing; two bantams are sitting; all is well with the doves. I am assured that Syb's room is a vision of beauty, and I am to be taken to see it in due course.

"Such is the sum-total of my home and homely budget, such a change to all the questions and affairs with which my brain has been busy for the last fortnight! . . ."

"*Hatton, July* 7, 1906.— . . . One of the most lovely summer days I ever knew is over, and I have just come in from my coffee in the garden, and from watching the herons flying over to poach the trout in the dusk. It has been hot, bright, but not thundery, with a nice breeze. A model haymaking day, and we have all but carried

one field. We have good crops of seeds, but only middling, as usual, of hay. I have enjoyed myself very much strolling quietly about and sitting down with my glass to watch the bird-life around. I see three broods of tufted ducks and two of wild-ducks, all quite tiny, and not above a week old. A large swarm of bees passed Morton (the agent) and me this morning by the Colthayes. We followed them up, and they went to an empty hive in Morton's garden and took possession—rather curious. The bamboo-garden with the white foxgloves and verbascums is very pretty, and, indeed, the verbascums everywhere are delightful. They go so well with the delphiniums and campanulas, and against any background. The foxgloves down your walk are in great beauty. The blue garden is bright and pretty, but some of the campanulas have turned out white and pink, and must come out. The peep of it from the pigeon-house room is charming, and will make a nice sketch for you and Syb. Vic seldom leaves me. She is very well and brisk, but certainly older. Good-night. I wish you had been here to share this lovely day. . . ."

"*Hatton, March* 10, 1907.— . . . A bright, breezy, nice morning after 23 degrees of rain, and I am going to stroll slowly to church, enjoy-

ing everything as I go. I have had by no means a solitary breakfast, as at least three brace of tits, two squirrels, two partridges, one cock-pheasant, two wood-pigeons, and a water-hen have more or less shared it with me and kept me long at it. The squirrel's effort to get his shoulders into the cocoanut when there was only room for his head, and his temper over not being able to, were quite comical. I went for a ride on the old cob with Vic, who got into difficulties at the Ford, and I had to get off and pull her out. Very stupid of her, but she was none the worse. The snowdrops at Atchley are very pretty, and in the Dingle, but beyond that the bulbs are pushing up there is no spring movement visible yet, unless you look very close at the buds. I think the new bit of garden is going to be very charming, and it will be a great sun-trap."

Mention should be made of one marked feature of his home life—his regular attendance at church. Whatever the weather, summer or winter, and often when he was not well, or had only rushed down for a few much-needed hours of rest and quiet, he would walk the mile and a quarter to the little church at Ryton, scarcely ever missing, and there, except for some special reason, he always read the lessons. His reading was very

impressive—reverent, quiet, and full of feeling. Everyone was glad when "the Colonel" was in church, and enjoyed his reading. A clergyman who was in charge of Ryton for a time the year before his death wrote afterwards saying that "he had been very much struck by, and should always remember, the very reverent and earnest reading of the lessons by him."

Cricket was always a great feature of the summer holidays at Hatton. A keen cricketer himself in his young days, Kenyon-Slaney was very anxious that his son should excel in it too. At the beginning of the holidays the house used to be filled with boys, and cricket became the order of the day, Kenyon-Slaney the centre of it all, planning and arranging the matches, and making fun for the boys as if he had nothing else in the world to occupy his mind and thoughts. He had a way of making everything seem "worth while," and of inspiring them with the same zeal.

A friend, writing to give some recollections of happy days at Hatton, says: "And now it is summer-time, and a whole cricket eleven of boys is arriving in a batch from Eton. Colonel Kenyon-Slaney is in the very centre of all the fun—umpire, kindly healer of discussions, and settler of all

thorny points. The memory of his ringing voice across the cricket-pitch to the shed comes back to one so vividly, recalling his strong, cheery personality. . . ."

Mr. Walter Long writes: "At home it was delightful to see him. He took the keenest interest in every detail. It may have been true of him—as, indeed, I believe it was—that some of his geese were swans, but this, surely, is nothing to find fault with. He delighted in it all because it was his home. He made the most of it, and he lived amongst it. He was part of it, and it would have been impossible to know him for what he was without seeing him in the home which he loved so well, and of which he was so attractive a part. . . ."

A frequent visitor at Hatton writes in much the same strain: "I always looked forward to a visit to Hatton, and, what is more, I always looked back on it with pleasure after I had left. The compact demesne, with its beautiful rocks and dingles, is a singularly attractive piece of country. My host always seemed to be considering how best he could give enjoyment to his guests. His shooting arrangements were most carefully arranged and thought out, and admirably managed, so that every gun (and he never had too many) got his

share. I never knew anyone more sensitive to a kind or grateful word than he was, and I can see now the tear rising to his eye when one expressed one's thanks for a good day's sport, or appreciation of anything he had done for one, or admiration of any of the beauties of the place. That tear to me told of the full heart, so responsive to sympathy, so glad to have given help or pleasure to anyone, so grateful to find another to share in his love of his home. . . ."

It is unfortunate that none of the letters from Kenyon-Slaney to his mother have been preserved. From the time he went to school till her death he wrote to her every Sunday without fail, and the letters, while they were full of the wider interests of his own varied life, showed what a "home" heart he always kept, and how his thoughts were always fixed on Hatton, wherever he might be.

The following extracts from letters written to different members of his family will tell their own story. Private and personal though they are, it has been decided to insert them as forming a fitting close to a chapter which has attempted to give some notion of what was an ideal example of English home life at its best.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF WILLIAM KENYON-SLANEY.

To his Daughter, aged Five.

"London,
"*Primrose Day*, 1893.

"My dearest little Syb,

"I am so much obliged for these nice little bunches of primroses which have just come, and which are now refreshing themselves in water after their long journey. I am very glad you were able to send them, and I wonder where you found them. I shall wear one bunch in my coat to-night, and I shall look so smart, and shall thank my little girl so much. Do you know, we all wear primroses to-day in memory of a great man who was Prime Minister to the Queen, and a great friend of 'Gargar's'* (who will tell you his name), and who was so fond of primroses. They were his favourite flower. With my love to little Rody,

"Your affectionate
"Father."

* The child's grandmother, Selina, Countess of Bradford.

To his Daughter on her Grandfather's Death.

"*March*, 1898.

"DEAREST LITTLE SYB,

"It makes me quite proud to hear of your being so good and so helpful to little Rody, and to Fraulein, and to all about you. One of the great lessons God means us to learn from a heavy sorrow is that the greatest consolation lies in helping others to bear their grief, and in not allowing our own to make us forgetful of theirs. We shall have many a bright and happy memory of dear 'Grandpa,'* and shall always be grateful to him for our happy time at Weston, and some day, perhaps, we shall all be together again.

"Your affectionate

"FATHER."

To his Wife: First Visit after his Boy's going to Ludgrove School.

"*May* 15, 1901.

". . . Just back, and so pleased. I mixed much with the lads, and made friends with lots of them, and a nicer, better-mannered lot I never was with. I had tea with them, and we had a

* Orlando, Earl of Bradford.

running fire of conversation on every subject: where we hunted—whether Yorkshire was as good as Leicestershire, whether stone walls were more dangerous than fences; where we shot; where we played cricket, and what we thought of the various heroes; how many sisters we had, and whether they wrote nice letters; who everybody was, and where they lived, and so on, and so on. I fairly revelled in it, and came away quite delighted with the whole tone and spirit and manner of the place. I knew nearly all the boys' fathers, and most of their grandfathers!"

To his Boy on the Sudden Death of Mr. Arthur Dunn, Headmaster of Ludgrove School, where the Boy then was.

"HATTON,
"*February*, 1902.

"MY DEAR RODY,

"I came away from London early on Friday, so I did not know of your great sorrow and loss till yesterday. I know how deeply and really you will feel it, and how you will mourn for one who was always so kind and good to you. But we are meant to learn from such sorrows that we are all in God's hands, and that He can call any of us away at any moment; and also we may

be quite sure that, although we cannot understand it always, whatever God does is best and right. At the same time, you must, I know, have a very sad little heart, and I shall come down very soon and see you. There is a thaw here, and I think hunting may be possible to-morrow, but hounds will be too far off for me. Your pony is very well, and the dogs are well. The frost has kept everything back, and the snowdrops are hardly yet in full bloom. I am afraid we shall soon hear of fox-cubs, and that we may have too many about. There seem to be a nice lot of partridge pairs and enough pheasants. I am going to get some little trout for the lower pools, and some trout-fry for the ditch above Abbot's Pool. We must have the cricket-ground rolled when the frost has quite gone.

"Your affectionate

"FATHER."

To his Boy R. O. R. K.-S. at Ludgrove.

"HATTON, 1903.

"MY DEAR RODY,

"I am, of course, sorry to hear of your disappointment over the holiday task and over the Division Lists, and, of course, I wish you were

higher in them ; but then, I know you are working with boys rather older than yourself, and that so, perhaps, you find the work rather hard at first. But never mind ; just stick to it like a man, and do your little best, and you know I shall always be satisfied with my boy. Don't get faint-hearted, but just try and try, and you will be surprised to find how well you will do it in the end. Keep your attention fixed on the job you are at, and don't think of other things, like Vic, or Tuft, or the name of your pony, or anything else. We shall come down soon and have a look at you. We did well over the wood-pigeons that one day, as eighty-seven was a good bag. I hear of plenty of foxes about, and hope the hounds will kill another or two yet. Tuft is hard at work killing rabbits, and, of course, says there never were so few ; but he catches a good lot. Love from us all.

"Your affectionate

"FATHER."

To his Boy R. O. R. K.-S. at Ludgrove.

"*November*, 1903.

"MY DEAR RODY,

"I must send you a line to tell you how pleased I am at your half-term report ; it shows

me you have well kept your promise to me, and that you have worked hard and well, and I am proud of my boy. I know it has not always been easy to tackle the difficulties which look so big when you first meet them ; but this success will help to teach you that with pluck and perseverance you can win nearly every struggle, and that difficulties always become less when they are attacked boldly and earnestly. So stick to it, old boy, and make the whole term as good as the half. I want to hear more about your football, whether you are still playing as captain of the Second Eleven, and what matches you have had.

"Your affectionate

"FATHER."

To his Wife on R. O. R. K.-S. going to Eton.

"*September*, 1904.

". . . I am so wondering how Rody has got on this morning, but I feel quite content that he will be very interested and happy in his new life and surroundings. As regards the masters, Eton is *very* much better than it was in my time ; they are less of 'dons,' and much more sympathetic and personally in touch with their boys. As to the boys, they are, after all, the best general

types of those amongst whom Rody's life is likely to be cast; they, of course, must reflect very much the same faults and failings that we note and find among their fathers and mothers, and they must contain the same percentage of 'bad uns'; but that percentage is not big, and I fully believe that Rody's right instincts and good training will keep him among the 'right uns.' I pray very earnestly for his guidance and protection. Just off on my pilgrimage.

"Ever your own,
"W."

To his Sister, V. K.-S., on their Sister's Death.

"Hatton,
"*February* 14, 1907.

"Dearest Violet,

"As L. will have told you, our ceremony here was just as you would have wished it—very quiet and simple, but everything very nicely done. Mr. Baker read the service beautifully, and the hymns were prettily sung. And so we laid her to rest in just the surroundings which she wished, and in confidence and faith closes the record of a life which to us may have seemed called upon to bear more than an ordinary share of the burdens of humanity, but which was rich in the example

which in so many, many ways it set to us all, and by which, I humbly pray, I may profit.

"Ever your affectionate

"W. K.-S."

To his Wife.

"Wellington Club,

"*April*, 1907.

". . . A dull morning, and feels rather cold, but I've not yet been out. I am so glad the lads have made a good start with the cricket. It is a great disappointment to me to miss them; but I see no loophole of escape before Friday, and then only in the afternoon, and till, probably, Monday. I fear we have tiresome and hard times before us. I am glad that Rody is becoming a really keen and good observer of natural history of all sorts. . . . I don't think we shall have any late sitting, as the guillotine at ten to-night will end all discussion, and leave only an hour or two of tramping through the lobbies. No news here, and the work dull, as, in view of guillotine, it is all so hopeless."

To his Wife on the Twenty-First Anniversary of their Wedding-Day.

"HATTON,
"*February* 22, 1908.

". . . Your letter was such a pleasure! Yes; every night and morning my prayer is always that I may be enabled to make you and the children happy, and I love to feel that it has been answered. I am more and more grateful for my blessing as each year passes by."

CHAPTER VI

SPORT

"You don't sport, more's the pity:
You soon would find if you tried it
Good sportsman means good fellow,
Sound-hearted he to the centre."

BROWNING.

OF Kenyon-Slaney's early prowess at games something has already been said in the chapter on Eton and Oxford. But at cricket and even at football he did not reach the summit of his success till some years later.

He played for England in the International Association match against Scotland on March 8, 1873. One account relates that "Kenyon-Slaney's run down with the ball" (he evidently had not entirely discarded the Eton style for the more modern Association tactics), "which caused the first score to be made by England, was an excellent one, and it may be here remarked that throughout the afternoon this gentleman particularly distinguished himself, both by his dribbling qualities

and the great pace he showed with the ball." In this match he scored two goals, and another account states: "For England Kenyon-Slaney was undoubtedly the superior player," the comparative here being clearly a mistake for the superlative.

He played with success in the final for the Association Cup in 1876 for the Old Etonians, and often took part in matches for that and other amateur clubs, and rendered great assistance to his side not only by his individual play, but by the vigour and energy which he inspired in other members of his side.

Although football is generally regarded as a violent game—and in those days it was not the habit for a referee to blow his whistle for a "foul" almost every time a collision occurred—yet it seems to have been the only game in which Kenyon-Slaney did not meet with a more or less serious accident.

The present Lord Kinnaird played regularly for the Old Etonians in those days, and continued to play for many years beyond the age when most men deem it advisable to retire. It is related that at a certain Etonian gathering Lady Kinnaird approached Kenyon-Slaney, and implored him to persuade her husband to give up playing. "If he goes on," she said, "you know it will end in a

broken leg, won't it?" "Yes," said Kenyon-Slaney, "but the leg won't be his own."

At cricket he played frequently for I. Zingari, M.C.C., Eton Ramblers, and other clubs, and was often seen in country-house cricket weeks—that most enjoyable form of the game which seems to be rapidly dying out—at Escrick, Wilton, Croxteth, the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin, and other pleasant places. But his name will be best remembered in the numerous matches for the Household Brigade which he played during his years of service in the Grenadiers. He was the first secretary of the Household Brigade Club when it was formed in 1872, and Guardsmen should not forget that it was largely owing to his perseverance and energy that the ground at Burton's Court which they now use was secured for the club in 1887.

In 1873 he headed the batting averages of the club with 24·7, and in 1876, 1877, and 1885 he had the highly respectable averages of 36, 30, and 36.

His name appears constantly side by side with that of Colonel Rowley, a most brilliant cricketer of those days, and though Kenyon-Slaney did not score the large number of centuries which his comrade had attached to his name, he compiled 130 for the Household Brigade *v.* the Foreign Office,

and 137 for the Grenadiers against the rest of the Brigade, both in 1880. As may be seen from the score-sheets, he was one of those invaluable men on a side who play up all the harder when things are going wrong, and while he may often be found with a small score or nothing out of a large total, it will generally be observed that when other batsmen had failed, he came out with a creditable score.

The late Lieutenant-General Sir F. Marshall, writing to Kenyon-Slaney just before he gave up the command of the 2nd Life Guards about Household Brigade cricket, says: "I must thank you, dear old boy, for all your efforts, and under your working for us how successful and brilliant we have been! May the Household Brigade long retain you, and may your cricket spirit never be less! You have tact and determination—two rare qualities."

He must have been possessed of a versatile genius for ubiquity as a fielder, as he is described as being very smart at point, cover, in the slips, and in the long-field. He also occasionally took a few wickets with slows.

In 1873, when playing for I. Zingari at Dublin against All Ireland, he met with an accident. While running a short run, which he was very

fond of doing, he received the ball in his face from the sturdy arm of Hone, a well-known Irish cricketer of the day, who was throwing at the wicket. The blow broke his cheek-bone ; nevertheless, with that extraordinary power he possessed of bearing pain, he attempted to bat again to save his side from defeat. The Zingari chronicler describes "how our Kenyon-Slaney was put *hors de combat* by a ball shied in at the wicket, which hit his head instead, but how that British Grenadier insisted with bandaged face (to the horror of his medical adviser) on making an expiring effort to save the All Ireland match."

The only time he appeared in first-class cricket was when he had the high honour of being selected to play for I. Zingari against Yorkshire in the Scarborough Week in 1880.

In local cricket he took an active part when he was at home. Mr. W. P. Pugh, whose commanding presence and genial spirit all will remember who played cricket on the County Ground in the seventies and eighties, had good opportunities of judging the game as an umpire. He wrote in a local article not long ago: "I remember the Colonel standing at point against All England, when his grand fielding brought continuous applause. Nothing got past him. He was also

a capable batsman, and hit pretty hard past cover-point."

Mr. Walter Long writes :

"I knew Willie Kenyon-Slaney for more than thirty years. I have been with him on the cricket-field, in the House of Commons, and in his own home. Everywhere and at all times he was the same —a real enthusiast in everything which he thought it worth his while to take up, loyal to a degree which was almost quixotic, determined to get to the bottom of things, and never allowing himself to be led away by casual statements or by information which he had not tested. He had a singularly bright, cheerful, and hopeful temperament, and was a friend and colleague of an altogether exceptional kind ; his imperturbable good-humour, notwithstanding the fact that he had a quick temper, and was able and ready to assert his own views with vehemence if he thought it necessary, was a very remarkable trait in his character.

"I remember an incident on the cricket-field which occurred, I am afraid, more than thirty years ago. He was acting as captain of a Zingari Eleven, some members of which had been up a little too late the night before, and were not as active in the field as he thought they ought to be ; a catch or two was missed, a ball here and there let

through their legs, runs made by the other side which he rightly held ought to have been saved. After one of the overs he addressed the eleven in strong terms, and told them that they must wake up and play the game properly, or they would lose the match. The very first ball of the next over an easy catch was put up at mid-off, where he was himself standing ; amid the ill-concealed jeers of the rest of the eleven, the ball fell through his hands to the ground. Many men would have been annoyed, and would have lost their tempers at this untoward incident, turning, as it did, the remarks he had just delivered, which were intended for his fellow-members, upon himself ; but not so Kenyon-Slaney: he did not say a word, he betrayed no signs of irritation, but quietly returned to his place, and set himself with redoubled energy to show an example to the rest of the eleven. I have often thought of this incident, because it formed a remarkable illustration of what the man really was.

" While it was a matter of great delight to us who had known and loved the father to see the boy playing for his old school at Lord's in July last, it was a difficult task for us to watch the cricket without feeling deeply moved, because we knew how dearly Kenyon-Slaney would have liked to see his lad achieve the great distinction, so desired by

all public-school men for their sons, of playing for the school at Lord's, and how gratified he would have been at the excellent start which the youngster made. However, this could not be, and all that now remains is that those of us who realized what his life-work was, who realized what the man was, and who had the inestimable advantage of his example should do our best to follow him, and live as he lived an upright, honest, brave English gentleman. He laboured all his life with one single desire—namely, to do his duty, and leave his country a little better than he found it."

He was an excellent all-round shot, equally capable of taking a place with the best in a large battue, as he did at Bradgate in 1882, or of enjoying a hard day's work for a small bag.

There were few country houses in the county where he had not shot at one time or another. One friend and neighbour writes: "He was a very good shot, and his quickness at rabbits in covert was almost unequalled; and although he never went in for rearing pheasants on a large scale, he always had enough to make his shoots most enjoyable to his friends. He had a natural gift for managing a shoot, and thoroughly understood the art of beating a covert and putting the pheasants over his guns well up in the air, and

never was guilty of the mistake made by so many people of having too many guns."

He met with several accidents in the shooting-field, besides one at Burwarton, which seriously impaired his activity from that time forward, and which is recorded later in this chapter. In his early days a gun exploded as he was loading it, and sent the ramrod through his forefinger. Some years after he received a shot in the eye, which, though it entered the eyeball, fortunately did not injure his sight. His capacity for enduring pain on these occasions was remarked by many people. He never let anyone know anything was amiss, and would often go through a day's work without a word of complaint when suffering acutely from some blow or from the attacks of gout which visited him frequently in his later years.

The following letter to his wife describing a day's sport in Ben Alder Forest in 1892 shows the keen delight he derived from deer-stalking, and gives a very graphic picture of the occurrences of the day:

"My day yesterday was so interesting that I must give you a short sketch of it: A stormy and wretched morning, and the stalkers very despondent; but it cleared into a fair day, only broken by a few very heavy snow-storms. On

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY, 1903.

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reaching my beat, it was at once clear that we had little on it, while over the burn, which is the march, our glasses showed us a great lot of stags snug on the warmer Ardverikie ground. Some of them moved, and, while watching them enviously, we discovered the Adverikie party stalking some of the deer we were watching. They were only on the opposite brae to us, so we lay very close and saw the whole affair—the spy, the advance, the preliminary stalk, the retire, the new advance, the final attempt, the crawl in, and then the shot which missed, and did exactly what we were longing for and reckoning on—sent every deer over the march on to our ground. I recognized the stalker—Stewart—and the rifle was a tall, fair young man with no whiskers and, I think, no moustache; but, of course, it was a very long way off to be certain through a glass, but it was most interesting and exciting."

In this, as in every other branch of sport, it was the sport itself, and not its result in the shape of so many stags killed, that mainly attracted him. His friend Mr. Charles Murray, of Loch Carron, with whom he often stayed in the stalking season, says: "He thoroughly enjoyed stalking for the *stalk*, and used to work out his plan of campaign with old Donald, asking and thrashing out the

points of difficulty—how the wind was *there*, etc."

Perhaps a fragment from one other letter to his wife describing a day's stalking may be here inserted.

"*Drumintoul, October* 10, 1893.—Just in from a long day, and have got two nice stags. One has a head of seven, the other of eight points ; both nice little heads, but nothing wonderful. I saw to-day a very fine sight. Two different lots of hinds, with their respective master-stags and a number of attendant cavalier stags, happened to get together. The two lords immediately fought a duel, and while they were so employed all the cavaliers seized the opportunity of making themselves agreeable to the ladies, whereupon a general mêlée and tournament began, every stag attacking every other one, charging and butting and prodding whenever he had a chance. It was a grand scrimmage, with such an accompaniment of grunts and roars and bellows."

His love of all animals was the principal factor in making him such a thorough sportsman. He had a great knowledge of natural history, and his diaries are full of observations recorded by him of the habits of various beasts and birds. Whether

he was watching a wren in the Hatton dingles, or stalking deer in the Highlands, he never missed seeing an interesting episode, and this delight in Nature gave him the faculty for complete enjoyment of all field sports.

He was especially fond of dogs and horses, and devoted to driving as well as hunting. His parliamentary duties in later years prevented his hunting as often as before, but he always did so when he could, and nobody had the interests of hunting and of the Albrighton Hounds more at heart than he. There was no better fox-preserver in the county, and he clearly demonstrated the fact that with ordinary care and a good keeper a good head of pheasants may be kept in conjunction with several litters of foxes. As a matter of fact, at Hatton the huntsman generally had to complain of there being too many foxes, for, owing to hounds continually changing foxes, and the difficulty of getting to them across the dingles, he found it a work of great difficulty to handle one.

It is noticeable that in the game-book in which he recorded all his shooting at home and elsewhere he always entered the number of foxes (if any) seen in the day.

He was a most cheery companion in the hunting-

field, and loved nothing better than to encourage a boy just beginning to hunt, whether by giving him a lead or a bit of friendly advice.

The following account, written by his friend and neighbour Captain J. Foster, a fellow-Guardsman, and for many years Master of the Albrighton Hounds, gives an accurate description of him :

" There are few to whom the name of all-round sportsman could more rightly be applied than to Colonel W. Kenyon-Slaney. During a friendship of nearly forty years, as a brother officer and neighbour, it was perhaps in all matters connected with hunting the Albrighton country that we were most closely associated. As everything he did was thorough, he was a keen rider to hounds, till an injury to his knee prevented his going as hard as formerly. This accident was an unusual one. One day in 1893, when shooting at Burwarton on the very steep side of a covert, he turned quickly round to shoot at a pheasant, and suddenly fell with a fractured knee-cap. Though in intense pain, he was moved that night the long drive back to Hatton, and was laid up for many weeks. It was always supposed that some old injury, probably at football, caused a weakness to the knee, which gave way with the sudden

strain. After this he was always slightly lame, but he never complained, and his pluck carried him through many a long day's stalking or shooting. Owing then to parliamentary and other duties, he was not so often seen in the hunting-field. However, his great interest in hunting continued, and chiefly, I believe, from his kindly nature. Though not able himself to take such a prominent part as before, it afforded him so much happiness to give enjoyment to others that he was most anxious they should have good sport from Hatton. During a summer he would tell me with delight of the many cubs in his coverts. One season I recollect there were six litters. We usually had our first day's cub-hunting at Hatton, and he took a personal interest in everything connected with the pack. As a member of the hunt committee, his advice was most valuable ; or if a judicious letter had to be written, it was Colonel Kenyon-Slaney who was asked to draft it, and who can forget his cheery speeches at the annual puppy shows ? When hunting, shooting, cricket, football—the sports in which he excelled—are mentioned, it must always be remembered that he was a first-rate whip. Devoted in his soldiering days to driving, he never missed a chance of handling a team. In the seventies, when there

were more coaches at Ascot than now, it was one of the pleasures of the day to join the critical crowd that collected to see them drive off. The gateway was much narrower in those days, and amusing incidents used often to occur. On one of these occasions I was standing by a well-known professional coachman, and after there had passed good, bad, and indifferent performers, he said, 'Here comes a workman.' It was Colonel Kenyon-Slaney driving the battalion coach."

CHAPTER VII

SHROPSHIRE

"The great work laid upon his threescore years
Is done and well done. If we drop our tears,
Who loved him as few men were ever loved,
We mourn no blighted hope, nor broken plan
With him, whose life stands rounded and approved
In the full growth and stature of a man;
Mingle, O bells, along the western slope,
With your deep toll a sound of faith and hope."

J. G. Whittier.

Loyal and devoted as Kenyon-Slaney was to every institution or association of which he felt himself to be a part, there was nothing to which he showed a warmer feeling of attachment than to his county of Shropshire.

The claim of being "a Shropshire man for Shropshire" he considered to be his chief qualification for the representation of the county. Salopians are proverbially described as proud, and he certainly was proud, if it be pride to feel a lively satisfaction in anything that is well done—in war or peace, in history or fiction, in art or

science, in agriculture or mechanics—by fellow-Salopians.

His mind was ever alive to the duty of urging young men in his county to do something useful, and in this his method included encouragement as well as advice. One, a new member of the House of Commons, records this of him: "After getting through my maiden speech without mishap, I received many kind words of congratulation, but of all of them Willie's were the only words which made me feel he was really as much pleased as I was myself that I had got over my first fence creditably."

One Shropshire friend, twenty years his junior, who had been a subaltern under him in the Grenadiers, writes: "I am convinced of this: his memory will live in Shropshire, and the pattern of his life, public and private, remains as an incentive to others to try and work for others as he has done." Scores of other men could be found in the county who had received some piece of good advice from him which they would be the first to admit had been a great factor in their lives for good. It was his delight to show boys and young men that whatever they were doing was worth doing well, and to point out to them what was most worth doing.

COLONEL THE RIGHT HON. W. KENYON-SLANEY, M.P.

From a Portrait by Milbanke.

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He was the sort of man whom everybody asked to be their trustee, because they felt that there was no man in whose hands they could more safely leave the interests of those they left behind them, and no man who would give up more time and pains to safeguarding those interests.

His popularity was largely due to the very real affection he felt for his friends in all classes. He writes to his wife of a near neighbour who met with his death in an awful accident: "I could lay down my head and cry" over his loss.

He was deeply attached to any of his servants or retainers who had been long with him or served him faithfully. Constant and sympathetic references are to be found in his letters to the illnesses or misfortunes of servants or cottagers on his estate. And they, in their turn, were not slow to return this affection.

In the county town of Shrewsbury he was a familiar figure, and appeared to be as popular with farmers and others from different parts of the county as with his own constituents. Huge crowds assembled when he was to address a meeting. He always managed to put a bit of local colouring in his speeches in the county which interested his hearers and made them feel at home.

He was known merely as the "Colonel," as if there were no other Colonel in the world.

On his return from the honeymoon at Willey, he drove with his bride through Wellington, where they met with a striking reception, and the event is thus described in the *Wellington Journal:*

"It is extraordinary to see what a public favourite Colonel Slaney has become in the Wellington Division, although the constituency preferred another before him when he sought to represent it in Parliament. Certainly, if anything were wanting to prove how thoroughly the inhabitants of Wellington have appreciated the honourable and conscientious manner in which he contested this division at the last General Election, nothing could have been more convincing than the enthusiastic manner in which he and his bride were received in Wellington on Thursday last. For many long years no sight like it has been witnessed in this usually undemonstrative little town, but on this particular occasion political foes as well as political friends joined hand in hand to give the happy pair a suitable reception. Guns were fired, bells were rung, houses were decorated, and the greatest enthusiasm was displayed. In the Market Place

the sight was one not likely to be soon forgotten by those who witnessed it, and we feel sure that Colonel Slaney and his bride will carry with them pleasant memories of the vast and enthusiastic crowd who cheered so long and heartily the conclusion of the gallant Colonel's characteristic words of thanks to his Wellington friends."

He was welcome in all country houses, not only because he was an expert at all rural sports and pursuits, but because of his genuine friendliness and the cheeriness of his nature.

His great power of enjoyment made him an acceptable guest, and as a host he had a wonderful knack of giving enjoyment to those whom he entertained.

Nor did he forget Shropshire when he was in London. Shropshire men and women gathered at his table, and the Shropshire Society in London always commanded his attendance at their annual gatherings, where he managed to introduce the best form of local patriotism into his speeches.

When he was quartered at Windsor he was not unmindful of Shropshire, for on many a Sunday morning might a Shropshire lad be seen coming up from Eton to breakfast with Colonel Kenyon-Slaney at the barracks; and few men there were who could make a boy feel more at home than

he did, drawing out the local knowledge of the youngster, and often showing him that he knew nearly as much of the neighbourhood of the boy's home as the boy himself.

Kenyon-Slaney took a very prominent part in the Naval and Military Veterans movement in Shropshire, the first county to bestir itself in this matter. The objects of the movement were to assist by pecuniary aid deserving old soldiers and sailors who had served in any campaign up to the Afghan War of 1879-80, and who were in reduced circumstances owing to age or sickness ; to bring to the notice of the War Office and other authorities the claims of eligible candidates for special campaign pensions ; and to supplement, where necessary, small pensions already granted.

It was inaugurated in November, 1895, and Colonel Kenyon-Slaney inspected the parade of veterans on the anniversary of the Battle of Inkerman in the Square at Shrewsbury, where they assembled under the shadow of Lord Clive's statue. He shook hands with each of the veterans, and spoke personally to all of them in turn, and in the evening presided at a banquet given in honour of the occasion.

It must be remembered that before the South African War there was less of that feeling of the

duty of the public to assist and befriend old soldiers and sailors which grew up during and after that war. It needed the enthusiasm and force of character of men like Kenyon-Slaney to make a success of this undertaking. As he said in his speech on that occasion, "there was a tendency during piping times of peace to forget those who had to go to the front when peace ceased and war began." But this tendency in Shropshire was rapidly overcome by the energy of Kenyon-Slaney and the able committee with whom he worked.

He was indefatigable in his interviews and correspondence with the authorities at headquarters on behalf of these veterans, and presided with great regularity at their gatherings, where his presence contributed largely to the good feeling and cheerfulness of the occasion. "Let them not think little," he said once, "of the emotions that sprang to their hearts. That was what the French called camaraderie, and that was what we meant by good-fellowship. If we once began to hold cheap feelings such as those, we should hold cheap the feelings which bound the army to the country."

In 1902 this society was merged in the Imperial Service Fund, in which he continued to take an

active interest, as he also did in the work of the Soldiers and Sailors' Families Association.

Among the numerous mourners on April 29, 1908, there stood by his graveside a select band of Shropshire veterans, paying their last tribute of gratitude and affection, a living monument to the loyal and patriotic spirit of their dead friend and benefactor.

The companionship of sport was a close connecting-link between him and his neighbours in Shropshire. He was always ready to do his share in the promotion of good sport and good-humour. The Albrighton Hunt owe a good deal to him for the never-failing interest he took in the welfare of the pack, and, indeed, their very existence, which was at one time seriously imperilled, was preserved largely by his resourcefulness and tact. In 1887, when Sir Thomas Boughey, who had hunted the pack for nearly twenty years, declared himself unable to continue hunting so large a country, it appeared likely that it would have to be divided, and possible that part of it might not even be hunted at all. No one was able to find any way out of the difficulty, and the situation seemed desperate. Kenyon-Slaney, however, had been engaged with others in the pursuit of a way out of the difficulty, and with his usual capacity

for business had his scheme matured when the meeting was called to consider the future of the hunt. This is his description of the meeting in a private letter:

"The meeting came off triumphantly, Monckton* in the chair, and a large gathering. After a statement from the chair as to finance, I had to propose the new idea—that an undivided country should be hunted by H. Legge and Foster. It made me quite nervous, but there was no one else who had Lord Dartmouth's authority to speak, so I did my best. The whole meeting rose like one man to the idea, which was received most enthusiastically. It was a veritable *coup d'état*, and no one was prepared for so happy a solution."

The crisis must indeed have been a serious one which made him feel nervous, but it was well worth it, for everyone who hunted in the country in those days knows that the joint mastership of Major the Hon. H. Legge and Captain J. Foster was the commencement of an era in the annals of the Hunt unexampled for sport and good-fellowship.

It was after twenty-one years' representation of the Newport Division and forty years of public

* Mr. F. Monckton, of Stretton.

service that his constituents decided to make a presentation to Colonel Kenyon-Slaney in the form of an address and a portrait. It was at his express desire that, if possible, a picture of his wife should form part of the presentation, and the committee were fortunate enough, with his assistance, to secure the services of Mr. Mark Milbanke, a rising young artist, who executed the two excellent pictures reproduced in this volume.

So many persons all over the county desired to participate in the gift that it was decided not to confine the subscription list to the Newport Division, and eventually over 4,000 names were recorded in the list of contributors, and inscribed in an album. He took the deepest interest in all the arrangements, and made various suggestions as to the programme and as to the subsequent reproduction of the portraits, with a view to securing that the subscribers should derive as much pleasure from the proceedings as himself.

The date of the presentation was fixed for April 25, 1908, and this would have been the occasion for one of the most remarkable gatherings ever held in Shropshire. The present writer well remembers a conversation with Kenyon-Slaney shortly before, in which the Colonel said that he did not often feel nervous about any meeting he

LADY MABEL KENYON-SLANEY.
From a Portrait by Milbanke.

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had to attend, but that he looked forward with great anxiety to this occasion.

There can be no doubt as to the reason for this apprehension. It was that, being naturally susceptible to emotion, and very easily touched by any sign of sympathy or gratitude, he felt doubtful if he could get through the ceremony without breaking down, and so casting a shade of gloom over what was intended to be a day of rejoicing. But it was decreed that a much deeper shadow should fall upon that day.

For some time it had been evident to those who knew Kenyon-Slaney well that his health was in a condition far from satisfactory. Repeated attacks of acute and persistent rheumatism drove him to Harrogate in the summers of 1904, 1905, and 1906, and he apparently derived benefit from his treatment there; but the attacks returned in 1906, and he then consulted Mr. Howard Marsh, a well-known London surgeon. Writing to his wife after his visit on May 29, 1906, he says: "He [Mr. Marsh] was pleasant, attentive, sensible. . . . He thinks he detects in my condition some signs of overwork, urges as much of country and quiet life as possible, doubts the wisdom of much House of Commons or London, and advises the doing of all that is possible to reduce the work within

easier limits." Signs of overwork no doubt there were, but the advice of the surgeon, excellent in itself, was not likely to be followed by one who took so serious a view of duties and responsibilities as Kenyon-Slaney, nor did it seem possible to him to put a limit to his activities.

In March, 1907, after a day's hunting, he admits, in a letter to his wife, that he had the "sort of feeling one would have about two days after one's horse had rolled over one." In November the rheumatic gout was again troublesome, and the early months of 1908 saw no real restoration to health. Yet even in February of that year he would not admit, in writing to his wife, that there was anything "serious amiss. It may mean that activity and the power to enjoy sport may gradually lessen, but as long as I have you and the young ones life will be full of interest and happiness."

He took part in the South Herefordshire Election at the end of January, and spoke at five meetings in three days. His indomitable pluck enabled him to attend to his parliamentary duties in the early part of the session of 1908, but in April increasing ill-health compelled him to give up his attendance at the House of Commons, and to come down to Hatton on April 3. There he became rapidly

worse, and shortly after all the arrangements for the presentation had been completed it became known that he was too ill to be present, though he struggled on till the last moment against the decision to abandon the engagement. On April 24, the day before the date fixed for the ceremony, he breathed his last.

That all Shropshire regarded Colonel Kenyon-Slaney as a friend was amply demonstrated on the day when he was laid to rest in the beautiful churchyard of Ryton. There was not a class, not a district, not an interest in Shropshire which was unrepresented on that occasion. It was almost the first day of real spring after a period of unusually severe weather. The sun shone bright and warm, and a genial breeze had succeeded the storm and snow. All nature was opening out, and breathed of hope and cheerfulness. None who heard it will forget the melodious notes of a thrush, who poured out his glorious song in harmony with all the thoughts and in tune with the whole life of that cheerful spirit whose body was at that moment being borne from the church to the grave.

And at that hour hundreds of hearts, present and absent, felt that they had lost a friend, but knew that the memory would live in Shropshire of one who tried to make those happy amongst

whom he lived, and to leave the world better than he found it.

"Who is the honest man?
He that doth, and strongly, good pursue,
To God, his neighbours and himself most true.
We doubt not that for one so true
There must be other, nobler work to do."

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Colonel the Right Honourable
William Kenyon Kenyon Slaney
P.C. M.P. D.L. J.P.
OF HATTON GRANGE SHROPSHIRE
We, your constituents, in the Newport Division of Shropshire,
with many other Salopians, resident both within and
without the County, desire to record our Sincere and Heart
felt recognition of the many Services rendered by you during
FORTY YEARS of your life, to your COUNTY and COUNTRY,
and to mark our appreciation of your vigorous efforts in Parliament
on our behalf during your long representation of the Newport Division —
a representation, after TWENTY ONE YEARS, still happily unbroken,
and characterised, as all sections of the community freely and ungrudgingly
allow, by a conscientious and whole hearted devotion to duty.
Fed that no words can adequately express our appreciation of your
constant and outspoken advocacy of the IMPERIAL, NATIONAL
and LOCAL INTERESTS committed to your charge, and of the
fearless maintenance of your principles.
We, therefore, whose names are subscribed, representing all classes, creeds, and
parties, beg your acceptance herewith of the portraits of yourself and of
Lady Mabel Kenyon Slaney
which we trust may long serve to remind your family of SHROPSHIRE'S
deep attachment to one of her most distinguished sons.
And it is our earnest prayer that it may please Almighty God
to crown the remainder of your days with every blessing.

THE ADDRESS FROM CONSTITUENTS AND FRIENDS.

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